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ENGLISH

DRAMATIC LITERATURE

NCOD



A HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH DRAMATIC LITERATURE

TO THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

In the following pages I shall essay to trace the origin, and to sketch the most important part of the history, of a literary growth which I have long studied with no common love. I am well aware of the difficulties besetting any such attempt, and of the defects which even a surer and more competent hand than mine could hardly be expected altogether to avoid. Nor do I claim for this book any merit beyond that of an endeavour in the direction of completeness within definite limits. These limits it may be in the first instance convenient to state.

I propose, then, to sketch the history of English Dramatic Literature from its origin to the close of the reign of Queen Anne. It is no part of my design to rewrite what for the greater part of this period has been so well written already,—the *Annals of the English Stage*[1]. But with reference both to the times before the Stuart Restoration, and to so much of those after that event as falls within my boundary-line, I shall seek consistently to treat of our dramatic literature in connexion with the national stage, its proper vehicle of presentment. Such contributions to our drama as are unworthy of a

[1] Mr. J. Payne Collier's work has, I need hardly say, been of the utmost use to me in many parts of my own. Its value is too well known to require more than a single word of cordial recognition.

place in our literature will receive at most a casual notice as illustrative of particular tendencies, styles, or fashions. The period of our drama which precedes its organic union with the general current of our literary history will be treated as summarily as possible; while I shall not attempt even an outline of that later period in which the higher efforts of our drama gradually, though not entirely, came to be divorced from its only adequate and legitimate exponent. Within these limits lies a field wide and varied —almost beyond comparison—in its products, but admitting as it seems to me of a connected survey. This survey will so far as possible be conducted in the order of chronological sequence; but there are certain general principles which will be kept in view throughout, and to which, while by no means desirous of laying down or expounding any critical canons in reference to dramatic literature, I may therefore here briefly refer.

Strictly speaking, dramatic literature is that form of literary composition which accommodates itself to the demands of an art whose method is *imitation in the way of action*[1]. The varieties of the drama differ widely both as to the objects imitated and as to the means employed in the imitation. But the *method* or *manner* peculiar to the drama is indispensable to it, and all dramatic writing, while of course amenable to criticism from other points of view, must, in so far as it claims to be dramatic, be judged according to its adherence to the dramatic method. The use of words is necessary, not to every kind of drama, but to every kind of drama which falls within the range of literature. To speak of 'dance-poems' is to use an expression analogous to such phrases as 'songs without words' or 'word-painting,'—metaphors intended to mystify. Where words have only a share in the action

[1] This is Donaldson's translation of the expression used by Aristotle, when pointing out (*de Poëtica*, cap. iii) the essential distinction between dramatic and other kinds of poetry.

of a dramatic work, it depends on the nature and extent of that share, how far such a work belongs to dramatic literature and how far it is to be judged from the point of view of literary art. The acted drama removes itself from the sphere of literary criticism, in proportion as it neglects words for other means of imitating action. Whatever importance it may happen to attach to the mere paraphernalia of action, these latter are quite extraneous to the dramatic art. 'Painting and carpentry' may, as Ben Jonson says, have been 'the soul of mask' in the days of Inigo Jones, and may in our own be the soul of many theatrical entertainments; but their significance only begins where the task of dramatic criticism ceases.

It may further be well to point out, that speech or writing not designed to be employed as part of an imitation in the way of action is to be altogether excluded from the domain of the drama. The rude beginnings of dramatic composition, in which a harmonious combination of words with other elements in the representation of action has not yet been reached, or in which the general demands of literary art are still imperfectly met, necessarily call for notice in the history of the drama, nor can they be wholly left aside in any attempt to sketch the growth of a particular dramatic literature. But a work cannot be regarded as entitled to a place in dramatic literary history by the mere fact of the assumption of a form which though necessary to the drama is, even when accompanied by indications of time and place, not exclusively proper to it. Such forms are those of the address and the dialogue. Epical, lyrical, didactic, or oratorical works—the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Odes* of Pindar, the *Dialogues* of Plato, the *Orations* of Demosthenes—may accordingly possess and exhibit dramatic *elements;* but only such works as pursue the dramatic *method* are of their essence *dramatic.*

The uses to which this method is put differ in various

ways,—in no respect more conspicuously than in that of the *subjects* of the action imitated. No merely formal distinction between tragedy and comedy can be maintained by those who consider dramatic literature as a whole, and are prepared to waive the transitory distinctions drawn at various times by successive writers or schools of poets. The difference between the tragic and the comic drama is no essential difference of method. Each of them appeals to distinct human feelings by treating its own kinds of subjects from its own points of view; and their results vary accordingly. But since they are one in method, there is no reason why they should be uniformly dissociated, though on aesthetical as well as ethical grounds it is most frequently desirable to keep tragic and comic elements of action asunder. There is however no law which binds down to any particular form either

> '*Tragœdia cothurnata*, fitting kings,
> Containing matter, and not common things'

or the lightest comedy, while both are of their nature subject to the same method.

As representing an action, every drama must exhibit that which renders an action capable of being regarded and treated as such, *viz.* its *unity*. With this question of unity the question of length has no real concern. That an action should possess a certain length, is a demand arising from considerations to a great degree determined by comparison, and therefore of their nature elastic. Thus it is appropriate to the dignity of tragedy, that a tragic action should have a certain length; but the actual extent of this length will not admit of absolute definition. 'Bad plays,' says Webster, 'are the worse for their length;' and good plays are at times by no means the better for theirs; but no permanent validity attaches to rules of criticism which condemned a comedy as a farce because it was written in three acts, or which rank a farce as a comedy because it is written in five.

The necessity that an action should be *one* is very far from being tantamount to the supposed necessity—upheld as a dramatic law by misapprehension only—that it should consist of *one event*. For an event is but an element in an action, though it may be an element of decisive significance. The so-called unities of *time* and *place* are purely fictitious principles, to either of which it may be convenient to adhere in order to make the unity of an action more distinctly perceptible, and either of which may with equal propriety be disregarded in order to give the action probability.

In a complete drama the action must be likewise *complete*. Now, every action has its causes, growth, height, return or consequences, and close. The actions of real life—historical actions in other words—cannot indeed in any case be traced to their roots with absolute certainty, or in all cases even with relative probability; and their results are lost in the continuity which is the stream of the historic life of mankind. But art is limited by no such uncertainties; and the dramatist in treating an action as *one* comprehends the whole of it within his scope. Accordingly, every drama represents in organic sequence the five stages of which a complete action consists and which are essential to it. The *introduction* or *exposition* forms an integral part of the action, even if (as with the Greeks) it be presented in the form of a Prologue, or (as in some of our older English plays and in many modern dramas) by means of a separate Induction, or even by an inductive Dumb-show. From this opening the *growth* of the action continues to that third stage which we call its *climax* or height; and hence again the *fall* or return of the action proceeds to its close or *catastrophe*[1]. There

[1] For an admirably lucid exposition of this 'pyramidal' $\overset{c}{\underset{a}{b}}\wedge\overset{d}{\underset{e}{}}$ construction of the drama, which is precisely that indicated in other words by Aristotle (cap. xviii), *a–c* representing the δέσις, *c–e* the λύσις, see G. Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas*, chap. ii. sect. 2.

is no law to prescribe the proportionate length at which these several stages in the action are to be treated; but it is obvious that experience could not but here introduce certain rules of practice from which the dramatist will find it neither easy nor in ordinary cases advantageous to escape. Herein, too, lies the secret of the enduring prevalence of the Roman system dividing a play into five acts, with which the several stages of the action usually, but of course by no means uniformly, coincide.

This completeness in unity need not exclude the introduction of one or even more subsidiary actions as contributing to the developement of the main action. The sole imperative law is that they should always be treated as what they are—subsidiary only; and it is for this reason that they are well called *under-plots*. It is a fair question (which much exercised the critical acumen of Dryden) whether the advantages of this device are not more than counterbalanced by its dangers; but it is not intrinsically illegitimate. The ancient drama, in accordance with its usual practice of sustaining the particular tone of a single play throughout its entire course, only at a late period introduced the use of under-plots: the modern has in many of its growths largely resorted to them.

Inasmuch as dramatic action, like that which it imitates, is carried out by human characters, it is on the invention and presentment of these that the dramatist has to expend a great proportion of his labour. His treatment of them will, in at least as high a degree as his choice of subject itself, determine the nature of the effect he produces and the species of drama to which his work is to be assigned. Whether however his characters be tragic or comic, or a mixture of both, it will depend upon his treatment of them in relation to the course of his plot whether his action is what all really dramatic action must be—*probable*. The dramatist (who deals with generals, and is not hampered

like the historian by a necessary reverence for facts) is to represent characters affected by the progress of an action in a particular way, and contributing to it in a particular way, because if consistent with themselves, they *must* so be affected and *must* so act. The range of the characters from which he may choose for imitation is indeed infinite; but his choice is limited by several considerations. In the first place, the nature of the action and the consequent nature of the effect sought to be produced will impose a corresponding propriety of selection. Again, this choice is subject to those ethical and aesthetical restrictions to which all art is subject, and which it cannot ignore without becoming frivolous or monstrous. Lastly, the general psychological experience of mankind teaches that the diversity of human character groups itself in a limited number of types representing its broad differences and main aspects. Under these the drama has been accordingly wont to range its characters, though no definitely restricted system can be maintained without invention being impoverished, and artificiality substituted for the free artistic reproduction of nature.

As exhibiting human action under its necessary conditions of time and place, the characters of a drama as well as the accidents of the events represented in it must be suited, in a greater or less degree, to the condition of what we term *manners*. It depends altogether on the degree in which considerations of time and place affect the nature of the action, or influence the developement of the characters, whether the imitation of manners becomes a significant element in a particular play. The time and the place may be so purely imaginary as to necessitate the adoption of a wholly conventional standard; or they may be of so vanishing a significance, that the adoption of any particular standard, except that which is generally appropriate to the nature of the subject, may be legitimately left aside altogether. Where on the other hand, as more

especially in a particular kind of comedy, that which is ridiculously vicious in a particular time or place is the subject of the action, the faithful representation of manners acquires a corresponding significance. But though we may speak of a comedy of manners, as implying the prevalence in it of this element, neither this nor any other kind of drama can be exclusively occupied with the representation of manners,—for a drama of *manners only* would be a contradiction in terms.

Lastly, there is nothing essential to the drama in the *source of the subjects* which it treats or in the *form of the diction* which it adopts. Enquiries into the origin and history of any dramatic subject are rarely devoid of interest, and they are never altogether devoid of instruction, inasmuch as they suggest among other things means for a comparison of dramatic treatment, the sole true test of dramatic power, since, as Dryden says, 'the *materia poetica* is as common to all writers as the *materia medica* to all physicians.' As to form of diction, questions whether prose or verse, or a particular form of verse, or a combination of prose or verse, be suitably employed in a particular drama, possess a relative and not an absolute significance. The answers may occasionally depend on the manifest appropriateness of unmeasured or measured speech, or of speech measured in a particular way, to the several moods of sentiment or humour to which they are applied. In general they will have to take note of the developement which the history of particular literatures gives to the significance of these forms or measures for the ear of particular peoples. No greater critical error could here be committed than to seek to establish the same standard for different nations and for different ages. When Aristotle mentions 'the species of poetry which imitates in hexameters,' we know that he is speaking of the epic; but Theocritus might have written a comedy in hexameters, if custom and the influence of

custom had not ruled otherwise. The French long refused to tolerate tragedies in prose; and few English ears can reconcile themselves to Calderon's trochees as a dramatic metre. The criticism of the outward form of dramatic diction may therefore learn much by a comparative, it will gain little by an absolute, process.

No elaborate system of *dramatic species* can be consistently applied to all dramatic literatures alike. These species are in every case the results of particular antecedents, and their growth is determined by particular conditions. The literature of one nation may borrow the name, and more or less of the features, of a dramatic species from the literature of another, but may at the same time materially modify what it has borrowed. Of the various kinds of the drama attempted in our own literature I shall seek in each case to trace the origin and the progress; but I shall not think it advisable to accept even all the classifications which the English drama has at one or the other time sought to maintain. The broad distinction between the tragic and the comic drama, or between the tragic and the comic parts of any given dramatic work, lies in the nature of the actions imitated, of the characters represented, and of the effects consequently produced. The strong emotions of the mind are alone capable of exercising upon it that powerful effect which, using a bold but marvellously happy figure, Aristotle termed *purification;* and it is to these emotions—pity and terror —that actions and characters which we term *tragic* appeal. The poets we term *comic* address themselves to the sense of the ridiculous, and their subjects are those vices the representation of which is capable of touching the springs of laughter. Or again, as every action may be viewed in the light of a conflict, the nature of that conflict determines the question whether the action is of a tragic or of a comic kind. The view taken of a conflict is however antecedently affected by the conception of the relation between the forces

engaged. It is here that moral considerations, based on principles admitting of modification under different conditions of religion and society, must be taken into account. The struggle of free-will against destiny, and that of individuality against the world, present themselves under different aspects—to take only one obvious illustration—to Hellenic and to Christian modes of thought, feeling, and life; and the conception of the problem and the solution of a tragic conflict will vary accordingly. Furthermore, in both the tragic and the comic drama the aesthetical idea of poetic justice—in other words, the victory of that which is noble and beautiful over impeding circumstances—must be liable to similar modifications. Yet these facts are far from precluding—they rather impose as necessary—the adoption of ethical and aesthetical standards in the judgment of dramatic works.

Ben Jonson truly observes that 'before the grammarians or philosophers found out their laws, there were many excellent poets that fulfilled them.' The historic sketch offered in these pages will seek to show how the practice of our dramatists evolved itself out of the relations between their individualities and the national life of which our drama formed part.

For the particular growth of dramatic literature to be reviewed is a national growth,—*i. e.* it possesses characteristics associating themselves with the developement of a nation. Now, a nation may be defined as a body of population which its proper history has made one in itself, and as such distinct from all others. The dramatist is in general more immediately subject to the influences of the national life than any other class of writer—especially in periods when the bond of national union asserts these influences as paramount, or absorbs in them to a greater or less degree the influences of other ties, such as those of language, of class, or of religion.

The existence of a branch of literature which produces

works in a dramatic form presupposes the existence of the drama itself. The elements of dramatic expression are inborn in man; but neither the drama nor dramatic literature has been reached by all peoples. A drama is the imitation (in a particular way) of an action regarded as *one*, and treated as complete. In the observation of the process of a complete action, and in the attempt to imitate it in accordance with such observation, must therefore be sought the beginnings of the drama. The process of a complete action consists in the stages through which it passes from beginning to end,—in other words, from cause to result. The original force which sets human action in motion most men have believed to come from without; the original cause of human action most men have sought in the operation of some Power which they have called God; and man's consciousness of this operation, whether he traces it in himself or in what surrounds him, is his religious belief. When therefore man attempts—in whatever form—to represent the divine action to his mind, he is producing what is in germ a drama; nor can the beginnings of any drama, ancient or modern, be traced further back than this; while on the other hand there is none which is primarily derived from any other source.

Now, wherever it is possible to penetrate into the historic life of peoples, we find them already living with advanced forms of religious conceptions which—whether monotheistic or not—attach to their idea of deity the idea of personality. A relation between human action and the operation of a personal divine being or beings is a hypothesis common to all historically known religions; and the consciousness of suffering and sin is the inheritance of all mankind. The conflict being thus given between the passion which obstructs[1] and the action which is the final cause of the

[1] Of course, as in many religious systems, there may be an active extra-human force aiding in the obstruction. Could this force be conceived of as ever ultimately victorious, a complete action (imitable in a drama) might be

result, it is only by a removal of the obstruction that the action can become complete. The process is therefore a purifying or expiatory one; and it is the divine person who brings to pass the expiation. No religion of which we can trace the fundamental conceptions fails to recognise in this purifying or expiatory process the solution of the problem of human life. In the untutored or uninitiated mind there cannot be more than a glimmering or a vague reminiscence of this conception; while those in whose intelligence it has taken root inevitably seek to establish it there in fixed forms, represented under some symbolism of which the full significance can never be wholly preserved or interpreted with absolute clearness. Thus it is that in the religious life of Egyptians, Indians, Chinese, and Greeks the deepest conceptions of death in life and life in death veiled themselves under dramatic forms which were at once jealously guarded from contact with the multitude and remained to it objects of unutterable reverence. And again, wherever in religious rites a dramatic element asserted itself,—as in the worship of Osiris, of Buddha, of Dionysus,—it sprang from an endeavour to symbolise in mysterious forms conflict and solution, passion and expiatory action.

To pursue this subject further would lie beyond the scope of my task. The ideas which have suggested the above remarks have from the point of view here in question been recently developed by a historian of the drama to whose labours, though they have not yet (in their published form) reached the particular dramatic literature treated of in this book, the latter will frequently acknowledge its indebtedness[1]. My purpose was merely to

conceived of with a tendency directly opposite to that indicated in the text. But the human mind has rarely contemplated the scheme of creation thus inversely. The active obstructing forces have therefore usually been considered as under the supreme control of the forces they oppose—just as our Devil is a created being, and a rebel, not an Anti-God.

[1] See J. L. Klein, *Geschichte des Dramas*, vol. i (*Einleitung*).

recall the fact that the origin of the Christian drama, to which the English historically belongs, was the same as that of every drama known to us in its beginnings. Not all nations have, by resorting to the dramatic method (imitation in the way of action), applied the religious conceptions indicated above in the cultivation of the drama and of dramatic literature; among the Hebrews and other Semitic peoples, as well as in at least one Aryan people which has cultivated letters with assiduity and success (the Persians), these forms of art are either wanting, or only appear as occasional and exotic growths.

It will therefore be necessary briefly to show, in the first instance, how our English drama is primarily the offspring, like the drama of all other nations, of religious worship; and how, as the offspring of Christian religious worship in particular, it connects itself organically with the central mystery of the Christian faith, the symbolical representation of the expiation of human sin.

But it is inevitable that the drama, even while still forming a part of religious worship, or while still so closely associated with the latter as to be only at times or from certain points of view separable from it, should begin to respond to other demands besides those of religion. In so doing, it necessarily assumes under different conditions different forms. Its primary object is still religious; but while aiming at this object, it likewise endeavours to attract and please its public, which regards it in the light of an entertainment gratifying eye and ear as well as in that of a part of religious service. The drama accordingly bestows increasing attention upon its external form, and in so doing becomes at once more artistic and more self-conscious. Again, with its public more and more in view, it seeks the aid of methods in themselves less complex than its own, and therefore susceptible of regulated and (under certain conditions) of literary expression at a much earlier period in the life of a people. The drama thus calls in the aid

more especially of narrative, of song—the latter being frequently combined with procession and dance—or of procession and dance alone. Like the ancient Greek drama, the English was preceded by both lyrical and epical poetry; and in the periods of their highest perfection, the dramatic literatures of both England and Greece did not disdain the aid of both lyrical and epical elements. In the case of the Greek drama, lyrical poetry was the form to which it attached its earliest efforts as an artistic creation, and which long continued to assert its birthright. To the songs chanted in honour of Dionysus at his altar were added narrative recitals, first of the god's own adventures, then of deeds connected with his mythology; nor was the remembrance of the primary significance of the lyrical element lost even in the stunted Roman form of Greek tragedy, or in Greek comedy until it had become confined within narrow limits, and could no longer assert the claim, urged for it by Socrates, to an equal rank with tragedy herself.

It was otherwise with the modern drama, and with our English branch of it. In the second place, therefore, it will be necessary to show how the English drama, having sprung from religious worship and gradually emancipated itself as a form of art, though it was occasionally to appropriate the lyrical element to its needs, attached its beginnings and adapted its main course to the epical. The liturgical source of the English drama offered to it both lyrical and epical elements, but it was with the latter that its earliest efforts towards independence were associated—and the impress of those efforts it never wholly lost. Our early drama was not, in the same sense as that of France, subject to the direct influence of lyrical poetry; it has no organic connexion with Anglo-Norman minstrelsy, or with cognate English growths; and those works of our earlier literature which seem as it were in search of the dramatic form unfortunately still denied to their age—

I need only instance *The Canterbury Tales*—are themselves in form epical. From the application of the dramatic method to epical materials it will be possible to trace without any important gap the twin growths of the English regular drama. Comedy is the immediate successor of the Interludes, which are themselves only a popularised form of the Moralities, abstractions having been converted into individual types; and in neither of these is there (except incidentally) any lyrical element. Tragedy connects itself not less directly with the Chronicle Histories, which again are a developement of the Moralities, and of their nature narrative or epical. The Moralities themselves are only a modified form of the Mysteries or Miracles, and both Miracles and Mysteries proper (though the latter term was not in ordinary use in England) owe their origin to the narrative or epical element in the Liturgical Mystery. And it may perhaps be added that the lyrical element will only in later and degenerate growths be found to claim an essential share in English dramatic works instead of a merely incidental introduction into them; while its representative, the Chorus, could never be domesticated, though it was frequently allowed a place, in our drama. The mere dramatic spectacle, on the other hand,—the representation of action addressed solely or mainly to the eye,—is necessarily superseded by a mixed growth, the Pageant; and in its later forms would be only tolerable as a hybrid species, had it not under the name of the Mask been assiduously cultivated by writers of talent and of genius, until it was refined into pure poetry by the touch of one of our greatest writers.

But after the beginnings of the English drama, which determined the tendencies of its earliest literary attempts, have been briefly discussed, the broader as well as the more widely interesting part of this survey will have to begin. For it will then be time to follow the glorious unfolding of our dramatic *literature*, and to seek to connect

its progress with the influence of other literatures, and of their dramatic branches in particular, as well as with the progress of our own literature and of our national life at large. From the former point of view it will be necessary to show how the classical drama, directly and indirectly, after determining the form and helping to furnish the themes of our earliest regular tragedies and comedies, subsequently at different times re-asserted its influence;—how modern Italian literature, which had naturally constituted itself the first representative of the Renascence, was in England as elsewhere regarded as a model in the drama, as it was in other branches of literary effort;—and how in their turn other literatures — the Spanish, the French—contributed together with the Italian to affect the progress of our dramatic literature, to suggest to it new species, to extend or modify those it already possessed, thus varying or narrowing, hastening or impeding, the several stages of its progress.

To these phenomena I shall, in so far as the range of my own studies or the assistance of other and more widely-instructed writers enables me to do so, seek in succession to direct attention. But I shall be more especially anxious not to lose sight of another aspect of my subject—the connexion of the progress of our dramatic literature with that of our national life in general. The question will suggest itself why it was that in a particular age of our history our drama and our dramatic literature rose, not indeed suddenly, but with all but unequalled swiftness to the highest perfection to which they have ever attained among us. Twice only in the history of the world has such a phenomenon been witnessed. For though there are nations of the East which have their drama and their dramatic literature, they, as lacking what in the full sense of the term is a national history and a national life, are also without what in the same sense deserves to be called a national drama. The Greek drama,

on the other hand, ran its splendid course in intimate association with the highest national developement of the people among whom it had established itself. A dramatic literature, small in volume, so far as it has been preserved to us, but of unrivalled beauty, speaks to us more eloquently of the greatness of Athens than the memorials of her historians or even the glorious remains of her plastic art. It enables us, in the few master-pieces of her great tragedians and of her foremost comic poet, to read the history of her impassioned struggle for national freedom, of her serene tenure of imperial power, of her lofty self-consciousness on the eve of her fall. Æschylus had not only fought at Marathon and at Salamis, but he had been trained in the Eleusinian Mysteries, and was a stern upholder of the political institution which was most intimately associated with the venerable political traditions of Athens. Sophocles was the associate of the Olympian Pericles and the poetical interpreter of his system of the best democracy—the rule of the best man; with his great friend he stood on the sunny heights of conscious achievement. Euripides was a member and the representative of a many-sided but uncertain generation; the luxuriant effeminacy of form which precedes and announces decay, and the relaxation of the union between moral purpose and creative invention, are the distinctive features which already his quickwitted contemporaries found mirrored in his transnormal productions. Of these contemporaries Aristophanes reveals in the successive phases of his comic Muse those changes in the national mind which no conservative party-feeling is strong enough to resist and no poetic genius is unsympathetic enough to escape, and he is thus a witness to the advent of the decay which he exposes to indignation and to ridicule. Attic comedy is, already in the form in which he handed it down to his successors, no longer of its essence national, and thus becomes fit in a still later form to be reproduced by the copyists on the other

shore of the Adriatic, unsatisfied with the products of their own severer soil. As for Roman tragedy, it is a mere imitation.

Once again in the history of the Western world the drama and dramatic literature rose to glorious perfection in close association with national life. But this time it was not a single nation, still less a single community in that nation, which assumed the imperial right of carrying the beginnings made by itself and others to the height of a perfection proper to itself alone. The breath of a great age must blow before a national dramatic literature can spring into being; but the breath which was astir in Europe in the age which we call that of the Reformation passed freely over mountains and seas, and seemed at first to scorn any barriers of State or race. But just as Renascence and Reformation alike failed to retain permanent possession of the whole of the domain into which they had penetrated, so it was neither at once, nor with a consentaneous effort, that the national life of the several peoples of the West pursued the wide variety of paths suddenly opened before them. History knows the reasons of this difference; it tells how of those peoples some had more recently, some less perfectly and effectively than others been consolidated into enduring political forms; it explains why some met with less readiness or less consistency than others the movement towards spiritual freedom; it shows how some were driven by internal or external conflicts into unexpected courses, and others into involuntary quiescence. But among the results of this variation, none is more striking than the diversity of national literary developements springing from the movement, common to so large a part of Europe and apparently identical in scope, which marks the close of the so-called Middle Ages. And, strange as it may seem, only two European nations succeeded at a comparatively early period in finding full expression in the drama and

in dramatic literature for the heightened or expanded consciousness of their national life.

Of the other great nations of Europe, Italy, the prey of rival foreign powers and at the critical period of her intellectual advance the victim of one, produced many artistic growths from which our own dramatic literature was a constant borrower, but only one genuinely national dramatic form, and that not a literary form at all. Many reasons may be assigned for this failure on the part of the country which was the first home of the Renascence to develope the earliest form of literary art which was distinctive of the modern era of Europe; but among them must be included that unsteadiness in the pursuit of national unity which is the despair of the literary as of all other forms of national life. On the other hand, France had to pass through a long period of internecine struggles before she attained to a unity which was not so much a historical developement as an imposed and accepted system. After breaking with her past as effectually in the drama as in any one branch of her national life, she despotically devised for her new Great Age an arbitrary adaptation of ancient rules. Within these limits the genius of French tragedy moved with broken wings; while French comedy, domesticating itself in the palace with the same flexibility with which its grosser predecessor had escaped from the control of the Church, created for itself a sphere in which it has never lost the mastery, first secured to it by the foremost of all modern masters of comedy, whether of character or of manners. In time English dramatic literature was both to suffer and to gain from the influence of so self-asserting and so irresistible a neighbour. The German drama, after eagerly setting forth in the course in which, as I shall have occasion to show, its early contact with England was neither unfrequent nor wholly unproductive, soon fell hopelessly behind; the drama of the German Renascence remains a fragmentary chapter of literary history,

leading to nothing but sterile scholastic imitations of classical models, or mere drastic farces for the gratification of the mob. The doom of the Empire seemed to have fallen upon the land, at the same time the seed-plot of modern intellectual freedom and the graveyard of mediaeval ideas, the battle-ground of the new learning and of the new dynastic ambitions of Europe. Not until centuries of strife and suffering had gone by was the tardy regeneration of German national life to be heralded by the new-birth of German literature, and to produce among its riper fruits the only works of the German drama which can intrinsically lay claim to a high literary value.

Thus it was Spain alone which shared with England the glory of attaining to a relatively early conversion of the religious and popular into the national drama. Yet even in this instance the parallelism is imperfect; for not only do the ripest glories of Spanish dramatic literature belong to a rather later period than those of our own, but they actually connect themselves with an age of national decay, —animated it is true by the ideas of a greater past,— rather than of national progress. The chivalrous enthusiasm which pervades so many master-pieces of the Spanish drama is indeed a distinctive mark of the Spanish nation in all, even in the least hopeful, periods of its history; and its religious ardour, though associating itself with what we are wont to term the Catholic *Reaction*, is in reality only another manifestation of the spirit which we justly hold to have informed the higher part of the Reformation movement itself. The Spanish drama does not and could not exhibit any tendency to emancipate itself from association with views and forms of religious life more than ever sacred to the Spanish people since the glorious days of Ferdinand and Isabella; thus it has been remarked that it is frequently difficult in Spanish dramatic literature to distinguish between what is to be called a religious, and what a secular, play. But the national character of the

Spanish drama in its flower is rather emphasised than impaired by this peculiarity; and Spain, though at least a generation in arrear of England, was after our own the first modern European country to attain to a full unfolding of that incomparably rich expression of the national life and consciousness in an artistic form—a national dramatic literature.

In tracing the history of our own dramatic literature from the period when, after a brief series of tentative essays, it sprang with unparalleled rapidity into glorious vigour, it will be well to remember how already in earlier days our national literature had shown signs of a tendency towards such a result. It will be well to remember that dramatic elements are not absolutely wanting even to its very earliest period; and how after the native language had re-asserted its birthright, in that springtide of English poetry which seemed destined to be followed by no summer, such elements had, as we may now say, put forth a bright and vigorous promise. Nor shall we forget that the blight which afflicted our national life in an age of barren dynastic conflicts exemplified itself in no way more conspicuously than in the absence of genuinely national forms of literature; and that hardly any but artificial or imitative works bridge over the gulf between the Plantagenet and the Tudor age. The history of the English drama during that interval is a chronicle of stagnation; and a brief narrative will therefore suffice of its uninterrupted but essentially unprogressive course. But not long after the opening of a new period in our national history, with the definite establishment of political unity and security under the control of a virtually despotic throne, the new intellectual movement begins to make itself manifest. This movement, indeed, came late to England, and seemed at first but slightly to affect the main conditions of her social existence, but under the co-operation of many and various causes it grew into an intellectual advance

of unequalled vigour and unrivalled splendour. The cultivation of classical studies in universities and schools, which exercised a direct influence upon a long period in the history of our drama, fostered as these studies were by the tastes of a learned dynasty;—the introduction and use of the art of printing, which was not indeed with us as with the Germans to become one of the levers of a great national movement, but which was to lend its aid to every form of literature, and to none more effectively than to the dramatic[1];—the growing habit of foreign travel and the marvellous rapidity of distant discovery, which expanded the imagination of writers and readers not less surely than they winged the ambition and stimulated the daring of what Frobisher called 'notable' minds among our soldiers and sailors;—these are only the most familiar among the influences which contributed to that advance. But in addition to these, it would be to ignore the connexion between the several developements of our national life, were we not to take prominently into account the political and religious phases through which it now passed. It was after all not from the schools, nor from the foreign sources which were daily becoming more accessible and more familiar, but from the progress of our own national life, that the English drama drew its deepest and its most vital inspiration. Henry VII with all his sagacity, or rather in consequence of the caution which was its chief element, had been unable to do more than prepare for the entrance of England into a wider sphere of action; and for the spiritual movement towards independence, towards the emancipation of the individual from the bonds of tradition, of which a few signs had already appeared in his reign, he had known no answer but immediate and absolute suppression. Henry VIII, unlike his father, was a tyrant by nature and disposition; but his youth had

[1] Thus it is no paradox to say, that Shakspere's plays were not first printed to be read, but were first read because they were printed.

fallen in a period when culture was already welcomed as the appropriate ornament of a Court; he was accomplished, and eager to exhibit his accomplishments; he was ambitious, and burning to satisfy his ambition. The nation, like the King himself, felt that the time was at hand for the country to use the strength it had acquired; and though there was little principle or moral purpose in the way in which the influence of England asserted itself in continental quarrels, yet both sovereign and nation entered into them with the readiness of a youth essaying his strength. There was a general desire, fostered by the influence of the personal character of a great minister, to do things in the grand style, both at home and abroad,—to display the strength and the wealth of England, to act a prominent and a magnificent part before the world. As yet literature, struggling with artificial forms and a material fallen out of cultivation, could only haltingly follow this tendency, till foreign models taught it sobriety and purity of form; and the drama, unconscious of its higher capabilities, could only seek by means of shows and pageants to gratify the grosser needs of an extravagant imagination. Then came what it is usual to call the English Reformation, of which the first act, the rejection of the control of Rome, well accorded with the consciousness of national strength pervading the people. But upon the great body of that people no spiritual movement had as yet seized of a strength sufficient either to control the arbitrary proceedings of the King, or to urge them in a decided direction to a determinate point. The turns and changes in the King's policy led him at times to promote what at other times he was desirous to suppress; he forced his subjects to devote consideration to theological questions on which it was his pleasure that they should hold definite beliefs; at one season he permitted the study of the English Bible which at another he prohibited; and his dissolution of the monasteries put an end to the moral

control of the poor by those who had hitherto been their almoners. Thus the reign of Henry VIII accomplished much that he had, and much that he had not, designed; and the reigns of his two successors, by driving the nation forwards and backwards from extreme to extreme, brought home to all classes of the population the fact that the Reformation had become to every individual a personal question. Literature, still the handmaid of authority, could but sway to and fro with uneasy self-consciousness; the new learning fermented or sank in formless vessels; and the drama oscillated between licence and oppression,—here advancing in more developed forms as Interlude or Chronicle History into a reflexion of social difficulties or the application of historical lessons to the questions of the present, there adapting itself to the modest task of entertaining, without offending, the Court.

The religious and political agitations of those reigns, and the persecutions which humbly reflect themselves in the uncertain fortunes of the infant drama, had disturbed the people, without offering them that assurance as to the ends which England was to pursue in religion and politics, which could alone lead to any sustained national efforts in any branch of national life. When Queen Elisabeth ascended the throne, she found a people divided with regard to the doctrines of the Reformation; but as a whole exasperated against the results of foreign influence, and resolute to uphold any government which would maintain England independent of foreign dictation, whether from Rome or from Spain.

As the Catholic reaction and the dynastic ambition of Spain grew into definite dangers for those interests with which English Protestantism was in sympathy, and as those dangers soon grew critical for the independence of the nation and its throne, it became necessary for England and her Queen to choose their side, and thus to determine the future of the nation. The course of

action which Elisabeth ultimately adopted no doubt presented itself in a clear and definite shape to the intelligence of those whose counsels she hesitatingly followed, but it was long before it so presented itself either to the Queen herself or to the nation at large. Only gradually, and at first half unconsciously, the sovereign and the nation came to assume their position in the van of the great struggle; nor did Elisabeth at any time become fully aware of the entire scope of the contest of which she came to be regarded as the heroine. Least of all was she aware that besides the national energy which placed itself at her disposal, the steady advance of the movement in her people towards spiritual emancipation was one of her best allies. This movement was to the last met by her with determined hostility; it finds only very isolated expressions in the literature of the age; the drama dealt with it chiefly in its merest outward forms, and usually in a spirit of enmity, narrow though not unprovoked.

Personally, with the self-willed pride of her race and with her sex's love of undivided admiration, Elisabeth desired to be all in all to her people, or at least to be accounted all in all by them. The fact that she *was* a woman, and that continuing unmarried she remained to the last a typical figure of one who admitted no rival to the nation's devotion, made it possible for her to evoke the desired response. It is much for any great time, and much for any great literary age, to be furnished with a personal centre of loyal emotion. Accordingly, throughout the literature of Elisabeth's age, and nowhere more constantly than in the drama, we meet with that half-literal, half-poetic worship of the Virgin Queen, which is something more than the ordinary incense poets have in readiness for the reigning monarch. And yet it is obvious that Queen Elisabeth was not really the power which inspired what we term Elisabethan literature. During the former half of her reign, English literature in

its non-dramatic branches differs but slightly from that of the preceding part of the Tudor period. Nor is the advance of the drama itself in its earlier Elisabethan growth in any sense rapid. It was still hesitating before freeing itself from the trammels of classical examples imposed upon it by a taste not essentially national; or it lent itself timidly to the exigences of a fashion imposed by the mere fancies of the Court. To what then is the fact to be attributed, that the better part of a generation had elapsed before the honest pedants and poetical phrasemongers of Elisabeth's earlier years were succeeded by the Sidneys and Spensers who glorified the period of this great crisis in our national history — the time of the struggle with the Spanish arch-foe—and that it was about the same time that the popular stage witnessed the productions of the first among the English dramatists whom we may dignify by the name of Shakspere's predecessors? Was it that the lapse of a quarter of a century was necessary before Gloriana could hope to gather in the fruits of the enterprise due to her accession, and that only step by step the age could rise from contemplating the pallid reproductions of Seneca to enter with an eager ardour of sympathy into the high deeds and thoughts of Mahomet, Scipio, and Tamburlaine? No — but that this interval of time, in which England 'of little body but of mighty heart' had grown apace, had awakened in the nation the full consciousness of the vigour swelling within it, and of the ends to which that vigour might be applied. This it was which encouraged our dramatists—true representatives of their countrymen—to put forth their strength, at first tentatively, soon in full and victorious self-confidence.

Thus, then, Renascence and Reformation and the political changes which ensued upon them contributed to prepare and fertilise the soil into which was to descend the seed of genius, the gift of Heaven. When

not first or alone in Shakspere, but in him alone transcendantly great, that genius appeared in the sphere of dramatic literature, it found the form not indeed perfected or fixed, but ready to its hand, and awaiting its transmuting touch. In speaking of Shakspere's predecessors, I shall seek to discriminate not only between the results of natural and so to speak necessary literary evolution, and the conquering efforts of original genius, but also between performance and promise. Of Shakspere himself so much has been written by critics, great and small, that as one of the latter category I shall seek to add but little of my own. It will be more advisable briefly to survey the history of opinion and criticism concerning the master-spirit of our dramatic literature, and to furnish in a convenient form the most necessary data for an examination of the materials with which he worked. But of his works themselves it will only be possible to examine some of the characteristics, and such will chiefly be selected as are typical of tendencies observable in the Elisabethan drama in general, rather than of the distinctive qualities of his own creative genius.

It will then be necessary to insist upon the truths, however well known, that Shakspere was indeed the master-mind of a particular literary growth, as he was a master-mind of all ages and of all literature; but that in our dramatic literature we have to treat of an Elisabethan age, not of a Shaksperean school. The age itself was far from adjusting its comparative estimate of its literary leaders with the positiveness permissible to posterity, and the dramatists contemporary with Shakspere will therefore have to be judged, less by comparison with him, than as independent workers in the same open field. It will be my endeavour both to trace in the more noteworthy among them the distinctive characteristics of individual genius, and show to what special results the several branches of our drama achieved in different hands,

—under the influence of earlier and of contemporary examples, and of foreign dramatic literatures. To Ben Jonson's long and illustrious career a separate chapter will be devoted; the rest of the dramatists whose activity mainly fell into the later part of the reign of Elisabeth will be grouped together in another chapter.

The death of Queen Elisabeth marks no break in our dramatic literature, such as it does in our political history, nor is there any significant personal relation between the first of our Stuart kings and the literature of his reign such as would allow me to speak of a Jacobean drama. The dramatic genius of Beaumont and Fletcher, though to some extent under the influence of a foreign literature of a continually growing importance for our drama, opened no essentially new paths; and the contemporaries of Fletcher in the reigns of both James and Charles I were content to adhere in the main to the forms employed by Shakspere and Ben Jonson (who long remained the honoured veteran of the drama), rather narrowing than extending their range. So brilliant is the activity of these later writers of the old drama — from Webster, who composed already under Elisabeth, to Shirley, who survived the downfall of the monarchy—that the decline of the drama, of which we shall in this period have to note the beginnings, cannot be attributed to an exhaustion of the dramatic vein in our literature. We shall have to acknowledge the absence in this age of any dramatist of commanding genius; but we shall I think be ready to explain the beginning of the decline in part at least by a co-operation of external as well as internal causes connected with the progress of our national history. It will therefore be worth while to show how the want of sympathy between the drama and the political ideas preparing to assert themselves in the national life, and the perennial conflict between the stage and the religious conceptions coming to ally themselves with those

ideas, could lead to but one result; and how this result was hastened by the too faithful reflexion in much of our dramatic literature of a tone of morality and views of social life not in harmony with the instincts and aspirations of the great body of the population. Thus we shall accompany our dramatic literature to the dark days of the temporary extinction of the national theatre.

With its re-opening begins a period of our dramatic literature which, though covering a long series of years, may I think be legitimately surveyed in a single concluding chapter. The creative activity of this period will be shown to be not indeed unconnected with its predecessors, but subject to foreign influences of unprecedented distinctness, and aided in their operation by external causes of unprecedented power. Addressing itself to a more limited public, and under the immediate sway of the tastes of that public and in the first instance of its centre, the Court, our dramatic literature will be found in pernicious contact with an unblushing immorality of social life. In the career as a dramatist of the foremost literary genius of this period—Dryden—it will be easy to study the principal phases of the earlier part of this period of our dramatic literature. His rapidity in the formation and defence of theories of the dramatic art will reflect at once the brilliancy, the uncertainty, and the lingering regrets characteristic of this age of English tragedy. After having vainly sought to give vitality to an artificial and unhealthy style, our tragic drama will be seen recurring — only however in some degree—to earlier native examples, but merely to sink into impotence, ill concealed by a rigid adherence to an arbitrary code of rules. Comedy, as following healthier and more congenial examples, and never wholly losing its connexion with the traditions of the old masters, and again as elastically lending itself to the tone and taste of the times without sacrificing the laws of its own being, will have to be followed through a more devious

course. In some of the last of the comic writers of whom I shall have to speak, we shall recognise elements of genius unhappily associated with a tone of morality at last intolerable to the very age of which the manners find so faithful a reflexion in its comedy;—and we shall leave this branch of the drama seeking to recover itself by efforts unfortunately as mistaken in their method as they are praiseworthy in their aims.

The general course of the national history in the period which I shall call that of the Later Stuart Drama will be found to exercise a very perceptible but not a commanding influence upon the progress of our dramatic literature. The party-struggles of the latter years of the reign of Charles II will be seen reflected there with all their fury and all their bitterness — but the drama will be necessarily found incapable of attesting the national recovery from the non-fulfilment of the Restoration compact. The crowned representative of the Revolution of 1688 is a great statesman, not a national hero; and the vast European struggle in which his wise policy engages the English nation only gradually comes to be regarded by the English public as a war waged for a national cause. Whatever influence the course of the struggle and its results may in the end exercise upon the national self-consciousness and the consequent national progress, the classes to which the drama addresses itself are too much accustomed to view the world of politics from the stand-point of party-feeling to make it possible for their literature to be animated by a broadly national spirit. The uncertainty as to the consequences which would follow upon the death of Queen Anne added a special element of uneasiness to the situation. Her reign, in which Great Britain asserted herself as the foremost among the European powers, and the period of preparation and preliminary effort which preceded it, could not indeed fail to offer signs even in its literature of the gradual broadening, deepening,

and strengthening of the current of national feeling and national life. But these signs are least manifest in that branch of literature which, besides addressing itself in the main to a particular class, had to so great an extent admitted the influence of foreign literary examples. The artificiality of our dramatic literature in this age precluded it from competing on equal terms with the new literary forms whose day was beginning; though comedy still retained enough contact with the life of the people to leave open the prospect of its further developement as a national literary growth.

But with the death of Queen Anne, the last of our Stuart sovereigns, I shall close my survey. A review of what lies beyond—a period of our dramatic literature full of interest even when it becomes all but devoid of promise for the future—must be left to another opportunity, or to other hands.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

*** The length to which these Additions extend is mainly due to the publication, since parts of this work went through the press, of several plays not hitherto generally accessible. As my wish throughout this work has been to refer the reader wherever possible to books within every one's reach, I have thought it worth while to add here references to Mr. Hazlitt's new edition of Dodsley's *Select Collection of Old English Plays*, in those instances in which it was not previously possible to give them.

VOL. I.

Pages 19 and 20. In Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* (p. 113) a curious passage is quoted from Honorius Augustodunensis, *de Antiquo Ritu Missarum*, explaining in detail the dramatic action of the Mass.

Page 61, note 2. The *Comedie or Enterlude, treating upon the Historie of Iacob and Esau* (which has been recently printed in vol. ii. of Mr. Hazlitt's new edition of *Dodsley*) should not have been mentioned among the plays exhibiting a mixture of miracle and morality, there being in fact no element of the latter in it. Beyond all doubt this is, as Mr. Collier has already pointed out, one of the freshest and most effective productions of its kind. The characters are real characters; and though the author takes most delight in the comic side of the story, he has rather skilfully contrived to supply some dramatic justification of the success of Rebecca's ingenuity. The servants of the two brothers are pleasantly distinguished as a lout and a pert little page, and there is a touch of prettiness in Rebecca's little serving-maid Abra. The moral of the story is turned to account for the doctrine of predestination and election, so that no doubt can remain as to the religious creed of the author, who winds up with a brief sermon and a prayer for Church, Queen, nobility, and 'the Queen's subjects universal.'

Pages 62–64. *The World and the Child*, *Hycke-Scorner*, and *Every-man* are all printed in vol. i. of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*.

Page 65, note 1. 'Lusty Juventus' is used as a jocular form of address in Thomas Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (act iv).

Page 77. To the generally accessible Elisabethan moralities has now been added *The Contention betweene Liberalitie and Prodigalitie* (printed by Mr. Hazlitt in

vol. viii. of his new edition of *Dodsley*). This production, which in its present form was performed before the Queen in 1600 (see v. 5), may be a revision of an earlier work—in any case the style is unequal, the incidental lyrics being in general superior to the dialogue. The action, in which several concrete personages take a subsidiary part, is upon the whole brisk, showing how after Prodigality had gained possession of Master Money, son of Dame Fortune, he lost his prize by his recklessness; how Money then fell into the hands of Tenacity (*i. e.* Avarice, who talks the usual peasant's dialect of the stage); how Prodigality then set upon Tenacity in the high-road and robbed him of Money; and how Money was finally delivered out of the hands of his tormentors and entrusted to the care of Liberality, while Prodigality (this is the effective bit of realism in the play) was tried in due form and sentenced, but in mercy forgiven part of the penalty. This morality, besides being written (or revised) by a scholar evidently desirous of showing his scholarship, is not devoid of a rude kind of merit; but it is not a little curious to find such a relic of the early drama performed before Queen Elisabeth at a time before which Shakspere had probably produced more than half of his plays.

Page 78. Tom Tiler and his wife are referred to in Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (ii. 6).

Page 81, note 2. The date of Jonson's *Mask of Owls, at Kenelworth* is not, as stated here (and by Gifford), 1626, but 1624 (as given p. 594, note). It appears from *The Academy* of Jan. 10, 1873, that a play by Captain Cox bearing the title of *Impacient Poverty* has been discovered by Mr. Halliwell.

Pages 111, 112, 115. The old *Appius and Virginia*, *Cambyses*, and R. Edwards' *Damon and Pithias* are all printed in vol. iv. of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*.

Page 117. *Tancred and Gismunda* is printed *ib.* vol. vii.

Page 117, note 3. According to M. Karl Blind (see *The Examiner*, June 13, 1874), Hans Sachs' *Lisabetha* treats the story of Keats' poem.

Page 120. T. Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is printed in Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. iv.

Page 139. For T. Ingelend's *The Disobedient Child*, see *ib.* vol. ii.

Page 140. For R. Udall's *Roister Doister*, and

Page 142. For *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *ib.* vol. iv.

Page 155, line 6 from top. For *perpetuated* read *perpetrated*.

Pages 170, 172. *The Spanish Tragedy* is printed in Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. v; '*Jeronimo*,' *ib.* vol. iv; *Solyman and Perseda* and *Cornelia*, *ib.* vol. v.

Page 177, note 3. In Middleton's *A Mad World, my Masters* (i. 2) Harebrain couples *Hero and Leander* and *Venus and Adonis* as 'wanton pamphlets.' *Hero and Leander* is also alluded to in Middleton's *The Family of Love* (iii. 2).

Page 179. The story of Tamerlane was dramatically treated by the Spaniard Luis Velez de Guevara (1570–1644) in his *La nueva era de Dios y Tamorlan de Persia*. See Klein, x. 725, note.

Page 182, line 8 from bottom. Middleton, in *The Witch* (iv. 2), has a passage resembling this:—

> 'What makes the devil so greedy of a soul,
> But 'cause 'has lost his own, to all joys lost.'

Page 203, line 8 from bottom. For *borne* read *born*.

Page 207, line 7 from bottom. Add as a note: The legend about Queen Eleanor's movements is referred to by Middleton in *The Witch* (i. 1):—

> 'Amsterdam swallow thee up for a puritan,
> And Geneva cast thee up again! like she that sunk
> At Charing Cross, and rose again at Queenhithe.'

Cf. also *Anything for a Quiet Life* (v. 3).

Page 209, note 1. Stukeley and the battle of Alcazar are mentioned in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit at Several Weapons* (i. 2).

Page 212. This passage is imitated in Chapman and Shirley's *Chabot* (iv. 1).

Pages 228, 229. *The Wounds of Civil War* is printed in Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. vii; *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, *ib.* vol. viii.

Page 232, line 1 from bottom. The name of William Haughton (here mentioned as joint author of *Patient Grissil*) frequently occurs in Henslowe's *Diary*, on one occasion in conjunction with the entry of a loan of x^s^ 'to releace hime owt of the clyncke' (the Clink prison in Southwark). His *Englishmen for my Money, or A Woman will have her Will* (recently reprinted in vol. x. of the new edition of *Dodsley*), entered in 1598 by Henslowe under the second of the above titles, but not extant in an earlier edition than that of 1616, appears to have been a very popular play. It is a bustling and merry comedy of London life, showing how the three daughters of a 'Portingal' usurer and their three English lovers carried the day over their avaricious father (whose nose, like that of Barabas, betokens his style of trade) and the three benighted foreigners—a Frenchman, an Italian, and a Dutchman—favoured by him. Anthony, an intriguing schoolmaster, and Frisco, a bungling clown, help to carry on the action, which is extremely brisk.

Page 235. Both *The Downfall* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington* have been reprinted in Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. viii.

Page 289, line 14 from top. The earliest known edition of John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* bears date 1698; but it was acted as early as 1667.

Page 313, line 17 from bottom. For *began* read *begun*.

Page 354, note. In stating that Cervantes and Shakspere died on the same day, I have fallen into an error already corrected by Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. ii. p. 132, note. The calendar not having yet been altered in England, there was a difference between it and the Spanish of ten days.

Page 390, lines 8-11 from top. Dele the words from *entered* to the close of the sentence, and read as follows: 'probably written before Shakspere's play, and derived (as it professes to be) directly from an Italian source.'

Page 415, line 17 from top. For *Tanaguil* read *Tanaquil*. *Ib.* it should have been stated that in the story of Grünewald, which ends with the incident of the moving wood, the besieged King's daughter does not tempt him to crime, but merely encourages him to resistance. No comparison between Lady Macbeth and the King's daughter is suggested by Simrock (who refers for the story to Schwarz and Grimm), but he compares her influence upon her father to that of the Witches upon Macbeth.

Page 427, line 1 from bottom. Dele the words 'an adaptation of this play.' (Cf. p. 288, note 1; and the account of *All for Love* in vol. ii. p. 515.)

Page 436. According to M. Ch. Louandre (*Chefs d'Œuvre des Conteurs Français avant La Fontaine*, Introd. p. xv), the old French romance of *Le Roi Flore et la Belle Jeanne* furnished to Shakspere the type of *Cymbeline*.

Page 438, line 18 from top. For *Hertzburg* read *Hertzberg*.

Page 458. *Mucedorus* will also be found in Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. vii.

Page 463. For *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, see *ib.* vol. x.

Page 472, line 13 from top. For *Shakspeare* read *Shakspere*.

Page 522, line 8 from bottom. Dele *But*.

Page 536, note 1. This French proverb occurs in an English form in Suckling's *Brennoralt* (act i), where it is applied to the politic treatment of the common people, who, says Melidor,

> 'are a kind of flies;
> They're caught with *honey, not with* wormwood, Sir.'

Page 581, note 2. The *Sicelides* of Phineas Fletcher (printed 1631) should have been mentioned as an instance of an English 'piscatory' drama. This was doubtless the production exhibited before King James I, at King's College, Cambridge, in 1615. See vol. ii. p. 367.

VOL. II.

Page 1. Since the pages on Chapman were in print, an interesting essay on this author has been published by Mr. Swinburne. I cannot here enter into any remarks on the criticisms contained in this essay; but it may be worth noticing that Mr. Swinburne finds it 'as difficult to discover any traces of Chapman in the comedy of *The Ball* as of Shirley in the tragedy of *Chabot;*' that he refuses to believe in Chapman's authorship of the 'comical moral' called *Two Wise Men and all the rest Fools* (printed with Chapman's name in 1619); but that he thinks there is some colour for the MS. correction which ascribed to Chapman the authorship of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, though he considers the style of this play 'unlike that of Chapman, Massinger, or Tourneur, but .. very like the style of Middleton.'

Page 4, note 2. For 505 read 525.

Page 40, note 2. Among Hans Sachs' dramatic productions (see vol. iii. of *Dichtungen von Hans Sachs*) is a 'tragedia' ('mit zweiundzwanzig personen und hat fünf actus') entitled *Der Fortunatus mit dem wunschseckel.*

Page 59, line 3 from bottom. The figure and the description of Erictho are alike borrowed from Lucan (*Pharsal.* bk. vi), whose horrors might have sufficed for Marston.

Page 114, note 1. The expression 'I could kill her with kindness' occurs in so late a play as Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle* (iii. 1).

Page 125, note 3. The student of the various cries, the popular ballads, and the humours in general of London street life, should notice an odd production of this period, called *The London Chanticleers*, which Mr. Halliwell thinks may perhaps have been originally presented out of London—possibly when the capital was 'ravaged by pestilence in 1636.' This one-act play, which can only by courtesy be allowed the name of a 'comedy,' will be found in vol. xii. of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley.*

Page 135. William Rowley's *A New Wonder, A Woman never Vext* (recently reprinted in vol. xii. of Hazlitt's *Dodsley*) evidently appealed to the sympathies of the kind of audience for whom plays dealing with the traditions of London were usually intended. It is at the same time a noteworthy play, which would of itself prove its author to have been a dramatist wanting neither in skill nor in power. He has made a really dramatic use of the story of Sir Stephen Foster, who after having been himself a prisoner in Ludgate, was raised to wealth by marriage with a compassionate widow, and with his wife's consent became the benefactor of the prison in which he had formerly been confined. Rowley has invented the character of the son who against his father's wish helps his uncle in the times of his troubles, and who afterwards succours his father when he in his turn has been overtaken by calamity. The character of the widow, whose good fortune resembles that of Polycrates, except in so far that her kindness of heart disarms Nemesis, is likewise an original (though not a very striking) conception. The pathos is not very deep, and the humour the reverse of refined; while the change in the character of the scapegrace uncle is too sudden to create any moral impression. But the action is brisk, the tone healthy, and the writing vigorous, so that the whole furnishes a good

example of a class of plays to the production of which the versatile Rowley seems to have been more than equal, whether as a joint or as an independent author. But the conditions of such a work leave it an insufficient test of his powers as a dramatist.

Pages 136, 137. For *The Two Merry Women of Abington* and *Green's Tu Quoque*, see Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vols. vii. and xi.

Page 137. The anonymous comedy called *How a Man may Chuse a Good Wife from a Bad* (reprinted in vol. ix. of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*) has been attributed to 'Joshua Cooke,'—probably, in the opinion of the author of the *Biographia Dramatica*, John Cook who wrote *Green's Tu Quoque*. This may be so, for the play, which appears to have gone through several editions after the first extant one of 1602, exhibits considerable wit and literary power. The plot, said to be founded on one of Cinthio's tales, is the story of a husband who after repudiating the devotion of a loving wife for the charms of a courtesan, and (as he thinks) ridding himself of the former by poison in order to marry the latter, finds that he has reaped the just reward of his criminal folly. The wicked Mistress Mary charges him with the very murder he intended to commit for her sake, and he is only saved by the faithful wife whom he had been ready to sacrifice. Several of the characters in this comedy are drawn with unusual distinctness, and the writing is full of wit. Old Master Lusam, who is invariably ready to agree with the last proposal made to him,—Justice Reason, who delivers himself with the most sonorous gravity of dicta signifying nothing,—Sir Aminadab, a pedantic schoolmaster full of quotations from the Latin grammar,—and the serving-man Pipkin, an irrepressible buffoon, are all effective comic figures; while the anecdotes related by the cynical Master Fuller for the encouragement of his more bashful friend are amusing, though not edifying, illustrations of the Ovidian Art of Love. Altogether, this play is one of the liveliest and wittiest of our anonymous earlier comedies, and well deserved to be reprinted. Sir Aminadab, by the bye, is prone to talking in hexameters, leonine and otherwise. The meaning of the term 'cutter,' used by Cowley for the title of the new version of his comedy (see p. 485, note 1), is illustrated in v. 1 of this play.

Page 140. For *Wily Beguiled*, see Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. ix.

Page 141, note 2. For *Sidney's* read *Campion's* (cf. p. 372, note 1). Both Campion's and Daniel's treatises are printed in vol. ii. of Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays on English Poets and Poesy*.

Pages 149, 152. For *The Return from Parnassus* and for *Lingua*, see Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. ix. p. 178, note. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* has been reprinted, *ib.* vol. x.

Page 205, note 1. For *Orima's* read *Oriana's*.

Page 263. *The Revenger's Tragedy* will be found in Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. x.

Page 263, line 5 from top. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Alexander Ireland, I have at last had an opportunity—long desired in vain—of reading *The Atheist's Tragedy* (in a reprint of the year 1792). The play as a whole is beyond all doubt a very striking work, though containing few passages of high individual merit besides those extracted—with his usual felicity of choice—by Lamb. I wonder however that he should not have included in them Charlemont's spirited lines in his first scene with his father, and the second of the epitaphs in iii. 1—the latter a brief elegy of a simple style of beauty one would hardly have looked for from Tourneur:

'*The Epitaph of Charlemont.*

His body lies interr'd within this mould,
Who died a *young man, yet* departed old.

And all that strength of youth, that man can have,
Was ready still to drop into his grave.
Far ag'd in Virtue with a youthful eye,
He welcom'd it, being still prepar'd to die;
And living so, though young depriv'd of breath,
He did not suffer an untimely death.
But we may say of his brave bless'd decease:
He died in war, and yet he died in peace.'

The exposition of the character of D'Amville, the atheist, is more impressive than its developement. Marlowe might have imagined such a hero—and even in the insolent philosophising of the murderer concerning the thunder and lightning which play about his head after the commission of his crime there is a vigour of conception, if not of execution, which attests a powerful dramatic imagination. But the progress of the action—which is clogged by an under-plot of revolting grossness—fails to heighten the effect of the character, though an attempt at incest is added to D'Amville's previous villanies; and his catastrophe—the overthrow of his reason after he has been baffled in his schemes—is not presented with any overwhelming force. Moreover, the moral which the tragedy seeks to teach—that vengeance should be left to Heaven—fails to impress itself as a clearly-defined principle, while the virtuous Charlemont and the sorely-tried Castabella can hardly be regarded as interesting in themselves. But a perusal of this tragedy (which by the bye is not without at least one manifest reminiscence of *Hamlet*—see Charlemont's speech in the churchyard, iii. 2—to which tragedy it might almost be thought to have been in a sense intended as a moral contrast) will I think decidedly raise the opinion of Tourneur's dramatic power likely to be formed by those who have read *The Revenger's Tragedy* only. It will at the same time confirm the impression that his poetic merits of a more general kind are confined to the originality of figure and expression, accompanied by a certain subtlety of thought, which he exhibits in particular passages. In *The Atheist's Tragedy* he has at times sentences of great length; but the versification is pleasing enough to make this tendency less perceptible than it might otherwise have become.

Page 293. Field's two plays have both been reprinted in vol. xi. of Hazlitt's *Dodsley*.

Page 342. Mr. Hazlitt's edition of the *Poetical and Dramatic Works of Thomas Randolph* (2 vols.) has now appeared,—a most welcome gift, for among our poets of the seventeenth century Randolph holds, if not a conspicuous position, at all events one to some extent peculiar to himself. And those who cherish the memories of Cambridge will specially delight in this opportunity of improving their acquaintance with so representative a University wit. Among the plays contained in this edition, and not already briefly described by me, *Aristippus* is a mere academical *jeu d'esprit*, of which the immediate object is to extol the virtues of sack and decry its rival, ale—whose praises, by way of compensation, Randolph has sung in one of his poems. This diverting little interlude—for it is nothing more—includes a burlesque of a lecture in philosophy, and a triumphant cantata by Simplicius in honour of his tutor and in obloquy of the schoolmen:

'Aristippus is better in every letter
Than Faber Parisiensis;
Than Scotus, Socinus, and Thomas Aquinas
Or Gregory Gandavensis,' &c.

The Conceited Peddler (printed with *Aristippus* in 1630) is an even less ambitious University 'show,' consisting simply of a monologue delivered by a pedlar who has brought with him from his travels 'for the benefit of this Royal University' a

collection of wares which he exhibits and comments upon. They comprise half-a-dozen incomparable points,'—including 'a point of good manners' ('this point is almost found in our college, and I thank the heavens for it, it begins to be tagged with Latin') and 'a point of false doctrine' ('made of a dangerous stubborn leather tagged at one end with self-conceit, at the other with wilful opinion')—a looking-glass, a whetstone, night-caps, and a lady in alabaster, whom the pedlar apostrophises in a quasi-parody on a famous passage in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. With the comedy of *The Jealous Lovers* (acted at Trinity before King Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria in 1632) Randolph achieved a success to which the various dedications and commendatory verses prefixed to the play bear testimony. But though it is noticeable for its numerous characters (mostly of the regular Plautine type) and for considerable spirit in the execution and fluency in the diction, the utter artificiality of its plot, which ends with an altogether intolerable surprise, betrays the *dilettante* playing dramatist. The main motive of this comedy is the jealousy, rising almost to a pitch of madness, with which a lover (Tyndarus) persecutes his faithful mistress (Evadne), and an equally faithful lover (Pamphilus) is persecuted by his mistress (Techmessa). To try the constancy of the objects of their love and suspicion, Tyndarus and Techmessa go so far as to feign death, and cause themselves to be carried in coffins to the churchyard. This test (which furnishes an opportunity for a clever imitation, or expansion, of the humours of the grave-digger in *Hamlet*) having only proved the fidelity of Evadne and Pamphilus, this fidelity is about to be rewarded by marriage in either case—when Hymen by a manifestation of ill-will forbids the banns. The jealousy of the lovers was the result of divinely-inspired instinct—for Tyndarus is the brother of Evadne, and Techmessa is the sister of Pamphilus! This species of solution—which savours of the pastoral—in truth stultifies the whole dramatic interest of the plot. The comic characters and situations are likewise artificial, though less conspicuously so; the writing is easy and redundant, and fully exhibits the talents of the author. Lastly, in his *Hey for Honesty, Down with Knavery*, published in 1651 (with augmentations) by 'F. J.' under this title and the Greek superscription of Πλουτοφθαλμία Πλουτογαμία, Randolph nominally appears as a translator of Aristophanes. The idea and the scheme of the *Plutus* was undoubtedly the basis of Randolph's comedy—but he has expanded the simple Aristophanic plot by adding an attempt at armed resistance on the part of Poverty ('Penia Poverty, or Penia-Penniless') and by otherwise diversifying the action, which closes with the marriage of the god of Wealth to Mistress Honesty, 'an honest scrivener's daughter.' And in order to give his comedy the force of a satire on the times, he has transplanted the locality to London, and made his Plutus the son and heir to Pinchback Truepenny. It is needless to say that Randolph—as well as the writer who published the play, and coloured it up to the date of 1651—fully availed himself of his opportunity of ridiculing the social, political, and literary foibles of his age, so that this work possesses considerable value, apart from its literary merits. Among the more broadly comic scenes will be noticed that in which Poverty marshals her forces, led by Higgen (vide Fletcher's *The Beggars' Bush*, cf. vol. ii. p. 217), by Brun, 'a worthy Scot of gallant race' who left one of his arms behind him at Chevy Chase, by 'Caradoc, true leek of Wales,' and by

'brave Redshank too, Termock by name,
Wonder of Redshanks and Hibernia's fame'—

a 'Falstaff's regiment,' as their commander calls them—and the last scene of the play but one, in which the Pope (whose authority has come to an end under the new *régime*) in vain seeks to recover it by a free use of the spiritual Treasure at his command, and ends with a ribald doggrel, Aristophanic at all events in its

impudence. (How spirited by the bye is the rhythm of the equally indecorous *Threttanelo* in ii. 1.)

Randolph, it is clear, was a real scholar of the lighter kind; and his familiarity with our own dramatic literature was considerable, as appears from the allusions to Shakspere and other dramatists scattered through his plays. Of his brief life, as Mr. Hazlitt conjectures, a great part was spent at the University, and though he came into contact with the circle who surrounded his 'adoptive father' Ben Jonson, his works are I think appropriately described on p. 342 as 'the scholarly amusements of an academical wit.' As such, and as a poet of no ordinary talent, he well deserves attention.

Pages 346, 348. For *The Ordinary* and *The Old Couple*, see Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. xii; for *The Heir*, *ib.* vol. xi.

Page 347, line 2 from top. For *Carturight's comic styles are equally fluent and serious*, read *Carturight's comic and serious styles are equally fluent.*

Page 351. My opinion here expressed as to the literary characteristics of Shackerley (such appears to be the best-authenticated spelling) Marmion has been confirmed by the perusal of two other comedies by that author, reprinted together with *The Antiquary* in an edition of his *Dramatic Works* quite recently put forth by Messrs. Maidment and Logan. Both *Holland's Leaguer* (printed 1632) and *A Fine Companion* (printed 1633) are the productions of an accomplished scholar, possessed of no ordinary powers of diction and versification. Marmion is however deficient in humour, and consequently unequal to effective comic characterisation. Indeed the earlier part of *Holland's Leaguer* almost resembles an attempt to bring a few chapters of Theophrastus or of one of his modern imitators on the stage. The main plot—the rescue of Philautus' nobler self from the fatuity of his self-conceit by a virtuous lady who in the end proves his sister—is moral in intention, but undramatic in execution; the under-plot of the siege of the infamous locality indicated by the title of the comedy is unredeemed by humour. *A Fine Companion*, though an admirably written Prologue (which borrows part of its phraseology from Persius) makes the reader hope for better things, has an intrigue of a very ordinary description, showing how

'Wealth shall be put back, when wit shall thrive,'

and how scheming and doting old age are impotent against youthful passion and determination. The more sustained passages of this comedy are generally well written, but the characters (including a variety of the Bobadil species) and the situations are alike devoid of originality. The title of the play would appear to have been derived from that of a popular song (see iv. 1).

Pages 357, 358. The plays of Robert Tailor, Lodowick Barry, and Lewis Machin, here mentioned, will be found (though hardly one of them is worth the seeking) in vols. xi, x, and x respectively of Hazlitt's *Dodsley*.

To the names here given may be added that of Joseph Rutter, the author of a translation of Corneille's *Le Cid* (1637 and 1640), and of a 'pastoral tragi-comedy' entitled *The Shepheards' Holy-day* (1635), warmly praised by Ben Jonson, who saluted Rutter as his 'dear son, and right learned friend.' (See *Underwoods*, xxii; Rutter afterwards contributed an elegy to *Jonsonus Virbius*.) This production (reprinted in vol. xii. of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*) is a well-written but not particularly interesting example of the pastoral drama; its plot is thought to have some reference to a love-intrigue of Sir Kenelm Digby, who was a patron of Rutter and to whom the play is dedicated.

Sir William Barclay (died 1677), who after holding a place at Court under Charles I was sent to Virginia, of which colony he afterwards became Governor, is the author of a striking play, *The Lost Lady* (printed 1639), which concludes the

twelfth volume of Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*. The heroine of this 'tragi-comedy,' after disguising herself as a man in order to escape from the power of her uncle (who had sought her death in order to prevent her union with her lover Lysicles), barely escapes being poisoned by her lover himself. The rather complicated intrigue, of which this situation is the climax, is contrived with considerable skill, and the writing is vigorous and effective in the serious as well as in the comic parts of the play. Barclay must have possessed considerable talent for dramatic writing, though he is not known to have composed any other play. He understands how to sustain and heighten in its progress the interest of a plot both ingenious and perspicuous; and his style is forcible, while he is devoid neither of a certain subtlety of thought—see Lysicles' soliloquy on suicide, act v—nor of vivacity of wit—see the frolicsome Irene's advice (as I may call it) to reviewers of 'Minor Poets:' 'Let me counsel you: lay them aside till they have contracted an inch of dust, then with your finger write their epitaph, expressing the mutual quiet they gave men, and received from them' (i. 2).

Page 370. ***Fuimus Troes*** is reprinted in Mr. Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. xii.

Page 433, line 4 from bottom. For ***sixteenth*** read ***seventeenth***.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

THE main source of the modern drama, of which the English is a branch, lies outside the domain of literature. It is to be sought in a popular outgrowth of religious worship; and to trace the history of this must be the first part of my task. But a misconception may be avoided at the outset by remembering that other elements, partly of a purely literary character, partly at least connected with literary tendencies, co-operated in the early history of the modern drama, as well as prepared the way for it.

Main and subsidiary sources of the modern drama.

Nothing which has had a real life in literature wholly dies. Though the dramatic literature of the ancients is in no sense the main source of that of the moderns, there are links of connexion between the two which are not to be lost sight of from first to last. They influenced the future of the modern drama while it was yet unborn. They affected its growth before it had itself assumed a literary, and while it was still struggling into a popular, form.

The early Christian dramas, based immediately upon Classical examples, are essentially literary efforts, and as such, however imperfectly, bridge the gap between ancient and modern dramatic literature. That which was probably the earliest of their number constituted at the same time an assertion of the faith then consummating its conquest over the Roman world, and, as there seems good reason to believe, a protest against the derision to which that faith

Influence of the Classical upon the early Christian drama. Χριστὸς πάσχων.

had been subjected on the *stage*. Though the form in which the Χριστὸς πάσχων has been preserved may contain considerable later admixtures, and though it has been doubted whether this work was known at all to the Western world till the middle of the sixteenth century, its authorship has been generally attributed to St. Gregory the Nazianzene, who died about A.D. 390. The author undertakes to narrate, 'after the manner of Euripides,' the Passion which redeemed mankind. His drama has a Chorus and a Messenger in the Greek manner; but its aim seems to have been essentially didactic, and it is uncertain whether it was ever acted on any stage[1].

Ludus VII Sapientium.

The *Ludus VII Sapientium*, dating from the same century, by Decius Magnus Ausonius, is rather a series of declamations than a drama[2]. On the other hand, the

Querolus.

Querolus, variously dated as composed in the fourth or the seventh century, distinctly announces itself as an imitation of the *Aulularia* of Plautus. It is a comedy, with a sufficiently ingenious plot, conveying the familiar moral of 'the biter bit;' but the influence of the Christian doctrine of charity is perceptible in the management of its close[3].

Comedies of Hroswitha.

Of more vital significance, but likewise connecting themselves with that Latin comedy to which the Italian predecessors of our English comic dramatists were in the fifteenth century directly to resort, are the dramatic compositions of Hroswitha, the Benedictine nun of Gandersheim. She lived in the tenth century, in the current of a spiritual revival associated with a most memorable period of Teutonic history, the age of Otto the Great, whose praises she sang, and to whose house she is by some stated to have been akin. Her avowed object in her six comedies was to turn against the Gentile his own weapons, and to inculcate Christian morality in the form, and occasionally with the phraseology, of Terence. The endeavour to serve the ends of religion by the means of human art was characteristic of the Order to which the pious Hroswitha be-

[1] Klein, *Geschichte des Dramas*, iii. 599 *seqq.*
[2] *Ib.*, 644 *seqq.*
[3] *Ib.*, 638 *seqq.*

longed[1]. That she should have had recourse to the particular author whom she imitated is not surprising. It was the good fortune of Terence to lead a charmed life in the darkest ages of learning, through which his works survived under the safe guardianship of monastic libraries[2]. Hroswitha, however, borrowed nothing but the outward form of Terence, against whose immorality she not only explicitly protests, but the tendency of whose plots is distinctly reversed in her own. Such an incident as the conversion of Thais in the *Paphnutius*, *e.g.*, would have been absolutely unintelligible to the Roman writer. Her plays are dramatised legends of Christian saints and of miraculous conversions; but while they thus connect themselves intimately with the later *miracle-plays*, the drama of *Fides, Spes et Charitas* has elements of the *moralities* as well. Whether these dramas, which were written in Latin, were ever acted may fairly be disputed; probably they were recited by the nuns on stated occasions, and without any of the paraphernalia which attend a famous annual representation of her profane model at the present day. That they were acted outside the cloister there is at all events no reason to suppose[3].

The example of Hroswitha was beyond a doubt largely

[1] The church-music of the Church of Rome is due to the Benedictines. Southey, *Life of Wesley*, ii. 117.

[2] Mr. Joseph Hunter has noted this fact in his treatise on *English Monastic Libraries*. Hroswitha herself says—

'Sunt etiam . . .
Qui, licet alia gentilium spernant,
Terentii tamen figmenta frequentius lectitant.'

It was remarked of the famous Archbishop Bruno, the brother of Otto the Great, that when as a youth he read the comedies of Terence, he never smiled at the laughable passages, his attention being wholly absorbed by the beauty of the form. Cf. Giesebrecht, *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, i. 322. The great attention which Terence is again receiving at the present day is of course owing to the philological, rather than the literary, significance of his works.

[3] Of Hroswitha's comedies an ample analysis will be found in Klein, iii. 648-754. Hallam has directed attention to her in the first chapter of his *Literature of Europe*.—A curious parallel to the endeavours of Hroswitha may be pointed out in the drama of the Jewish poet Ezechiel (probably about 100-200 B.C.), which in Greek form and language gives the story of Moses leading the Chosen People out of Egypt. Unhappily only a fragment has been preserved. It has been edited by L. M. Philippson (Berlin, 1830).

The ecclesiastical literary drama in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

followed. Apart from the unsubstantiated rumour of the composition of old Frisian monastic comedies at an even earlier date (ninth century), there is every reason to conclude that the comedies of Hroswitha were far from remaining an isolated phenomenon. Here and there a learned ecclesiastic, anticipating the spirit of the Renascence rather than following that of his own age, seems to have devoted himself to the classical models pure and simple. Thus the *Andria* of Terence was translated (by the Benedictine Notker of St. Gallen) early in the eleventh century (1020 A.D. *circ.*). Probably about the middle of the twelfth was produced, probably by Vital of Blois, the author of the comic narrative poem of the *Geta*, the *Comœdia Babionis*, a purely literary effort in Latin distichs, but dramatic in form[1]. Generally, however, it was in accordance with the spirit of the age to seek, as Hroswitha had done, a combination of classical study with the ideas of the Christian religion. Sufficient attention is perhaps hardly paid, in broader surveys of the history of European civilisation, to the simultaneous revival of classical study and religious life in the middle of the tenth century. The centre of this movement was the school at the Emperor's court, an institution of Charles the Great restored by Archbishop Bruno under the protection of his brother Otto the Great; and hence it spread through the monastic schools of the Empire[2]. It was the age when German kings once more dreamt of a world-empire under the sanction of the Church; and the tendencies which both powers encouraged rapidly communicated themselves to neighbouring lands. With the Norman Conquest they found their way across the sea; and the French ecclesiastics who filled the English monasteries brought with them the literary tendencies of the times. Thus it would only be in accordance with probability, that Latin religious dramas treating of the legends of the saints should have been performed in the English monasteries in the latter part of

[1] They are both printed in Wright's *Early Mysteries and other Latin Poems of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (London, 1838).

[2] See Giesebrecht, *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, i. 329.

the eleventh century, as they had been performed at Quedlinburg, and perhaps at Gandersheim. And as these performances would be in the first instance treated as part of the education of the children committed to the care of the religious foundations, the legends of the patron-saints of boys and girls, St. Nicholas and St. Catharine, would be expected to have been treated with especial predilection. The *Ludus de S. Katharina*, to be again mentioned below, which is the earliest religious play of which we have nominal mention, and which the Norman Geoffrey (afterwards Abbot of St. Albans) caused to be represented at Dunstaple about the year 1110, is indeed usually supposed to have been written in French. The supposition, however, is not proved; nor am I convinced by the arguments adduced in its favour[1]. In any case, we do not possess it, and cannot with confidence assert whether it is to be regarded as an essentially literary work, or as already belonging to the popularised form of the miracle-plays, of which there are several Latin specimens extant from the same century. 'Copes' were borrowed in which to act it; but this proves nothing. It is stated to have been the reverse of a novelty 'among the masters and scholars;' and, while it is useless to dogmatise on the probable character of an extinct play, the fact of the cultivation of the religious drama, as a growth of literary origin, in the English monasteries from the latter part of the eleventh century can hardly be regarded as doubtful. And yet this fact is of very secondary importance; for the beginnings of the modern drama, which were to absorb into themselves whatever existed as a literary aftergrowth

[1] See, however, Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage*, ii. 131, a work which I shall henceforth cite by the author's name only. It seems to be overlooked that the phrase 'quem miracula vulgariter appellamus' only shows that Matthew Paris, writing in 1240, classed the play of St. Catharine with the miracle-plays to which he was in his time accustomed. Geoffrey was not a religious when he wrote the play and had it acted; but he was 'expectans scholam S. Albani sibi repromissam.' As to the Latin plays (with an occasional French refrain) of the Englishman Hilarius, written in France not later than the reign of our Henry II, see Morley, *English Writers*, i. 542-552. For other Latin plays of the same century see Wright, *Early Mysteries, &c.*

without having themselves a literary origin, had long been in operation, and if they had in England not already asserted their claims to popular attention, were speedily to do so.

No drama in England before the Norman Conquest.

It may, then, be assumed that the beginnings of a possible dramatic literature, which are to be directly traced in their origin to the dramatic literature of the Romans and Greeks, existed in England as well as elsewhere in the period succeeding upon the Norman Conquest. Nor will the fact be forgotten hereafter, that it was precisely the class to whose fostering care the first efforts of the modern popular drama itself were due—viz. the ecclesiastics—which had not altogether lost sight of the dramatic form of literary composition. Before the Norman Conquest there are no signs in our own literature of any impulse towards the dramatic form; such literary tendencies, therefore, as might have survived in the English nation, were *a priori* unlikely to take such a direction. For the step is not only great, but vital, from the mere dialogue to the rudest form of drama. It is therefore needless to dwell on the popularity, in the so-called Anglo-Saxon times, of such a work as Boëthius *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, which King Alfred translated into his native tongue, and which is a philosophical colloquy, with quasi-lyrical passages, between the author and the abstractions of Wisdom, the Reason, and the Mind. *The Debate of the Body and the Soul* again, which in one or the other form makes its appearance in our literature from the tenth to the fourteenth century, and which is a mixture of dialogue and narrative, has likewise no claim to be taken into account[1]. Nor have the earlier treatments of the subject of the *Harrowing of Hell*, which was to play so important a part in the mysteries, any dramatic element at all[2]. Lastly, it would be an error to seek in the *Anglo-Saxon*

[1] In the French *Débat du Corps et de l'Ame* (*Ancien Theatre François*, vol. iii. pp. 325–336) an '*Acteur*' narrates the action springing from the dialogue.

[2] I speak of the two poems in the *Exeter Book*. Even a later poem on the subject, belonging to the reign of Edward II, is described (by Wright, *Introduction to Chester Plays*, Shaksp. Society's Publ. 1843, p. xiv.) as 'not a dramatic piece, but a mere poem in dialogue.' See also *Reliquiae Antiquae*, i. 253.

Passion of St. George[1], lively as is the mixture of narrative and speech which it presents, for any dramatic element leading in the direction of the miracle-play. These instances will suffice to guard against any mistaken attempt to search for dramatic beginnings where they are not to be found. And it may perhaps be here noted at once, that the looseness of terminology which confounds dramatic literature with other forms merely containing dramatic possibilities, is only characteristic of ages not vitally conscious of the essentials of the drama itself. Chaucer indeed made a very innocent use of the words *tragedy* and *comedy* when he applied them simply to poems ending happily or unhappily[2]; but the tendency to speak of works as dramatic when they are in no proper sense such is to be reprobated like all other looseness of expression. The very age which witnessed the flower of our drama drew a jealous distinction, which the dramatists themselves at times acknowledged, between the works of poets and the works of playwrights. This was indeed an utterly illegitimate distinction; but it marks by its very error the consciousness of the elementary principle, that no work abstaining from the employment of action has any concern with the drama. It may indeed frequently seem as if the genius of our literature had hovered on the verge of the discovery of the dramatic form; and it is in this sense that we are justified in speaking of Chaucer's gifts as dramatic, and of his masterpiece as containing in it the germ of a drama[3]; but the indispensable step was not taken by him, (although he was certainly cognisant of the beginnings of the drama, as will be incidentally shown below,) and, had an opportunity offered itself, he would probably have disdained to take it. Lydgate, who was so ready to betake himself from his cloister and school to the streets of London, whose cries he knew by heart, might be willing to compose processions

[1] Edited for the Percy Society (vol. xxviii.) by the late Archdeacon Hardwick.

[2] *Troilus and Cresseyde*, bk. v. For similar examples see Warton, *History of English Poetry*, section v.

[3] This view has been admirably brought out by Professor Pauli, in his delightful essay on *Chaucer and Gower* in his *Pictures of Old England*.

of pageants 'from the creation[1];' but Chaucer, however 'emptie' his purse, would doubtless have scorned to apply his fancy to such a purpose.

The relics of the Roman stage.

But this is to anticipate, although the warning is possibly not premature even at this early point of the enquiry. To return to our starting-point, it may next be asked whether any other influences survived from the ancient world which, though not in themselves constituting the origin of the modern drama, were yet of a nature necessarily to affect its early growth. Now, it is well known that in the history of the Roman stage we have to distinguish two developements, the one native, the other foreign and artificial. The latter, which alone is represented in the Latin dramatic literature handed down to us, was, like the great body of that literature at large, borrowed from the Greeks. It is doubtful whether at any time the reproductions or imitations of Greek tragedy among the Romans secured the favour of more than a small cultivated minority; already in the latter days of the Republic the multitude (including even the knights, according to Horace) could only be reconciled to tragedy by the introduction of that species of accessories by which in our own day a play of Shakspere's is said to be 'revived[2].' In the early days of the Empire tragedy was dissolved into choral music and pantomimic action; and the *pantomime*, a species of ballet of action, established itself as a favourite class of entertainment. Greek comedy, *i. e.* the new comedy of Menander, with which we are acquainted in the versions of Plautus and Terence, survived more honourably both in Rome and the provinces; it is praised by faint blame in a work of St. Augustine in the beginning of the fifth

[1] Collier, ii. 141. The same author's *Chickevache and Bycorne* cannot be called dramatic in design or character.

[2] The comparison is not impertinent. What could better correspond to Horace's description,

'Mox trahitur manibus regum fortuna retortis,
Esseda festinant, pilenta, petorrita,'

than *e.g.* the actual representation into a performance of *Richard II.* of Bolingbroke's entry into London? The imagination of our audiences is as systematically debilitated as that of the Roman mobs.

century; and it thus, as has been already seen, furnished a literary link between the ancient and the mediaeval world. But both tragedy and comedy are to be regarded as essentially the diversions of cultivated Romans. The popular dramatic appetite of the Italian capital had long fed with greater relish upon dramatic entertainments of native, or at least neighbouring origin. Probably those farces which combined pantomime, dance, and music with humorous dialogue, and were termed *Saturae* or mixtures, were of Etruscan origin. With them were united the *Fabulae Atellanae*, which came from Campania, and, originally improvisations, were introduced into literature in the early part of the first century B.C. These were distinguished by their four established character-figures, which have survived to this day in the popular Italian comedy[1]. Another species, apparently more peculiar to the town, was the *Mimus*, which, like the *Atellana*, took its figures from common life, but had no established characters. These popular farces were at all times the favourite dramatic entertainment of the Romans, whom they delighted by their vigour, vulgarity, and obscenity, while constant opportunity was found in them for that licence of speech which, in spite of law and government, tempered the despotism of nearly all the Caesars.

Mimes and strollers.

In the days of the close of the Republic, and of the early Empire, the size of the Roman theatres, as well as the diversity of nationality which was beginning to characterise the Roman population, made it necessary to devise entertainments suitable for large masses of spectators, and at the same time agreeable to the craving for mere enjoyments of the eye. The circus had at all times, and the amphitheatre since its establishment, outvied the theatre in popularity: as they exhibited a constantly increasing variety of

[1] The Italian *farsa* is the origin of the *commedia dell' arte* of the sixteenth century, as to the influence of which on our English comedy I shall have something to say below. At Naples, no form of dramatic entertainment seems to flourish during the heat of the summer except the oldest, unless it be the politico-religious sensation drama. I remember how, during a sojourn there in a summer-month of 1869, our nightly choice lay between Arlecchino and the *Nun of Cracow*.

spectacles, processions, and contests by land and water, they more and more superseded it; and the theatre itself came to supplement its waning attractions by every species of illegitimate intermezzo. The ribald jests of Atellanes and mimes, and the lascivious charms of the pantomimes, were not enough to satisfy an endless appetite for amusement; and it had to be gratified, in addition, by 'crowds of rope-dancers, conjurors, boxers, clowns, and posture-makers, men who walked on their heads, or let themselves be whirled aloft by machinery, or suspended upon wires, or who danced on stilts, or exhibited feats of skill with cups and balls[1].' Nor was the degradation of tastes inevitably produced by such entertainments confined to the public theatre; Roman supper-tables were enlivened by similar exhibitions, as a relief to the recitations by which the guests had to allow themselves to be fatigued, or to the conversation which they must not unfrequently have found it difficult to maintain at a level of interest, when politics were dangerous and philosophy and wit had alike taken flight from the overladen board.

In short, the decay of the Roman theatre, and the character of the dramatic or quasi-dramatic amusements which survived its decay, are sufficiently attested throughout the period of the Empire. The history of Roman pantomime connects itself, grotesquely enough, with the history of the Roman Empire from Nero to Theodora; luxury, lust, and licence were sought in it by its votaries, and stigmatised in it by the fathers of the Christian Church. But though it gradually ceased to flourish as a diversion of state, its traditions, as well as those of the humbler mimes, were carried on by that class of actors which is of its nature indestructible. The strolling mimes carried the last, and probably many of the worst, reminiscences of the Roman acting drama across the period of those great migrations

[1] Quoted from Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. v. p. 67; where see a curious passage from Bulenger *de Theatro*. More details, together with a full general view of the Roman entertainments of the days of the Empire, and of the decay of the Roman drama, will be found in Friedländer's *Sittengeschichte Rom's*, vol. ii. pp. 125–396.

which changed the face of the Western world. In the fifth century we hear of a condemnation of *histriones*, *mimi*, and *joculatores* by an ecclesiastical council. Previously, the Church had with praiseworthy impartiality excluded not only actors of all kinds, but also those who were addicted to 'theatromania,' from the benefits of the Christian community. Similar enactments occur frequently in the Caroling period; yet the craving for dramatic entertainments of a popular character continued to produce a supply, and it is related of Lewis the Pious, how he never raised his voice in laughter, not even when at festivals there appeared, for the enjoyment of the people, '*thymelici, scurrae et mimi*[1].'

Here and there may have existed remnants of ancient heathen religious rites, among both Celtic and Teutonic populations, which partook of the nature of masques, and thus contained dramatic elements; but these phenomena are so isolated as not to require more than a passing notice[2]. The performances of the strolling mimes, on the other hand, with which we are more especially concerned, must necessarily have been so varied in character as utterly to defy analysis. It is the glory of the true popular entertainer to be all things to all men; to mingle every element of amusement which the human voice, face, and limbs can furnish with every adventitious aid which ingenuity and experience can provide in a portable form. The *joculatores*, the successors of the mimes, whose name they occasionally received, and like whom they shaved their heads (doubtless originally for convenience' sake, thus helping to produce that eternal type of the profession which every actor, from the highest to the lowest, betrays), were therefore of their nature Protean. The term may be taken to include reciters, singers, musicians, dancers, posture-makers, buffoons, and actors of every description, and doubtless frequently included all these characters in a single person. According

The joculatores of the early Middle Ages.

[1] Klein, iii. 635; cf. iv. 104; ii. 665.

[2] Ib. iii. 636. Grimm's attempt to deduce the German popular religious plays from Germanic paganism cannot be accepted. See Wilkens, *Gesch. der geistl. Spiele in Deutschland*, p. 3.

to the nature of their accomplishments, these entertainers would be welcome among high and low, at the court and in the castle, in the market-place and on the village-green.

But as these purveyors of amusement associated themselves with particular countries, and sought to gratify the higher as well as the lower tendencies of particular social developements, their efforts gradually fell into more distinct forms, and their appellations began to assume distinct and different meanings. In France, to which it will suffice to confine our attention, the literary tastes of the higher classes had taken two principal directions, in the North of an epical, in the South of a lyrical character. The age was an age of wars. Its social system everywhere asserted the personal, and ignored what had not yet become a national tie. In addition, chivalry had established its artificial code, consciously devised to impose restraint during the pursuit of the two strongest of human passions, love and war. Under these influences flourished the poetry of the *troubadours* and of the *trouvères*. The home of the former was Provence, and here the chief duty of the *jongleurs*, as the *joculatores* were now called, was to accompany with music and song the lyric recitations of the masters who had taken them into their employ. In Normandy, and the north of France generally, the *trouvères* sang their *chansons de geste*, commemorative of deeds of war. Efforts of this kind required a rather more elaborate training; and the names of *trouvères* and *jongleurs* became all but interchangeable as indicating a profession. And both here, and afterwards in England, it was customary for great personages to appoint *jongleurs* or *menestrels* of their own (*ministeriales* is the regular term for servants of the house, but the idea of unfreedom is not necessarily attached to it even in a much earlier period[1]), who at times enjoyed high esteem and position, while others, who were without any such special appointment, led a life of errantry from castle to castle. The intimate relation between the Norman dukes and barons and their minstrels may possibly have a Scandinavian origin, for the duty of the skald had

The jongleurs and minstrels in France;

[1] See Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, ii. 152.

been to sing the warlike deeds of his lord. But while the *minstrel* proper accompanied his lord to the field, and shared with him the danger and the honour of his warlike exploits, the connexion between him and the humbler kind of entertainer, who was still the servant of the multitude rather than of a particular lord, cannot have been wholly forgotten. Every one remembers Taillefer, who furnished a treble prelude to the fight at Senlac—of songs, of a juggling trick, and of self-sacrificing valour; but one of the chroniclers who recounts his heroic death calls him by the names which, in the mouths of churchmen, were terms of opprobrium[1].

and in England.

The Norman Conquest brought to England a mixed variety of elements; in the expedition itself a motley crew of adventurers had accompanied the Norman chivalry; and not only were they followed by families of emigrants, like that of the famous William de Cognisby, but the social, not to say the literary requirements of Messires Boutevilain and Trussebot cannot have uniformly lain in the direction of the 'chansons de Karlemaine è de Rollant,' which Taillefer had sung 'before the dukes.' In other words, if for the gleemen or musicians, whose simple strains had satisfied our English ancestors, were substituted the minstrels who glorified the deeds of their Norman masters, a multitude of mere strolling performers of all kinds was doubtless likewise gradually introduced. There seems every reason to believe that in France itself the popular performances of the strolling *jongleurs* survived throughout. The romance-literature of the age, further elevated by the growth of a new cycle of singular moral dignity (the Arthurian), and the beginnings of the religious drama itself, occupied the poets who composed for, and virtually themselves belonged to, the higher classes; and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, at all events, the *trouvères* readily followed the monks in the composition of religious

[1] '*Histrio*, cor audax nimium quem nobilitabat.'
And again—
'Incisor-ferri *mimus* cognomine dictus.'
(Guy of Amiens.) See Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, iii. 478, *note*.

plays, which these had already practised in the eleventh. Such are the works of Rutebeuf, to one of which (the *Théophile*) I shall have a future occasion of returning. But there must also have taken place profane performances in every sense of the term; and from these *jeux*, through the *fêtes de l'âne* and similar popular festivals, must be derived the first *farces* of the Basoche and the *sotties* of the *enfans sans souci*, from which French comedy derived at least some of its elements, and the authors of which are not therefore to be primarily regarded as the descendants of the monks or of their secular fellow-labourers[1]. This would account for the double fact in the history of the French drama (which I cannot here further pursue),—that the religious drama in France met with an early and vigorous cultivation, and that already in the thirteenth century the French stage had almost entirely emancipated itself from dependence on the Church to which it owed its new birth. Otherwise, it would be hardly conceivable how in France parody and witty travesty should have established themselves side by side of the religious drama in the sacred edifice; though in the religious drama itself was found a basis for a national dramatic developement. The truth must be, that in the

[1] Ebert, *Entwicklungsgesch. d. franz. Tragödie*, p. 20; Klein, iv. 24; Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, iii. 414. The lay brotherhood of the Passion acted mysteries. The moralities of the *clercs de la Basoche* (*i. e.* Basilica) were their serious, the *farces* their humorous plays. The latter are to be distinguished from the *sotties*, which are entirely satirical, and in form largely allegorical. Abundant examples of the last three species will be found in the first three volumes of Viollet le Duc's *Ancien Théatre François*. The species were often interchanged between the different associations. Arnd, *Geschichte der franz. Nationalliteratur*, i. 221. The burlesquing of religious rites, which was so popular in France and which seems to have had a Byzantine origin, was also occasionally carried on in England. Of the Feast of Fools traces are said to be found in England in the reign of Henry IV, about which time it is thought to have been abolished. The ceremony of the election of a Boy-Bishop, whose reign lasted from St. Nicholas' to Innocent's Day (6th to 28th of December), was practised in schools, as well as in parishes; and survived in the former down to the period of the Reformation. See Hone's *Ancient Mysteries Described*. The *Mass of the Drunkards* (Wright's *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ii. 208) was probably a mere literary squib. The ribaldry of mock litanies, which caused so much trouble in the days of Lord Eldon, has been recently revived in connexion with the attempts to establish what is pleasantly termed 'the liberty of the Parks.'

absence of a united historical consciousness capable of producing a general national sympathy for profane heroes, the sacred drama first supplied the materials on which the poets could work for the benefit of the nation at large[1]. But a lower class of entertainers had already understood how to furnish dramatic performances of a different kind; and thus the history of the French drama became, and long continued, that of a struggle between theatrical associations severally representing its serious and its comic growths.

Otherwise in England, and, as it seems to me, for a very self-evident reason. It is certain that the Norman Conquest brought to England the species of *minstrels* into which the *joculatores* had in Normandy and Northern France developed; and it may be assumed, both that it likewise brought performers of a different and lower class, and that a distinction was not always maintained between them. It is true, that in dwelling on the habits of courtiers in the twelfth century, John of Salisbury condemns *tota ista joculatorum scena*[2]; and says that *histriones* and *mimi* may not receive the sacred Communion[3]. But it is very doubtful whether he is referring to dramatic exhibitions or actors properly so called[4]. On the one hand, there is no sign whatever of the efforts of the popular entertainers having assumed an independent dramatic form. We shall hear of religious plays as having been performed at an early date in London; but even if we are to suppose them to have been performed by *histriones*, these merely adopted a species of performance which they had certainly not introduced. When in the thirteenth century the representation of religious plays by *histriones* is condemned as improper,

[1] Cf. P. Albert, *La Litt. Française des Origines au XVII^me^ Siècle*, p. 69, where a judicious contrast is drawn with the connexion between the Greek national epos and national tragedy. One or two French mysteries on subjects from profane literature are mentioned by Ebert, *u. s.*, p. 33.

[2] Klein, iv. 105. According to Morley, *English Writers*, i. 599, 'When J. of S. talks of actors and plays, it soon appears that he is retailing opinions of the fathers, and that his mind is upon Plautus and Terence.'

[3] Warton, sec. vi.

[4] Cf. Wright, *Introduction to Chester Plays*, p. vi.

they are evidently likewise to be regarded as merely the followers, though at the same time the rivals, of the clergy[1]. It will be long before we shall meet with English dramatic efforts of a popular character displaying independence of a religious origin; and there is no possibility of connecting the Interludes, as we may connect the *farces* and *sotties*, with a previous secular growth. On the other hand, I am at a loss to discover in the remains of Anglo-Norman literature, whether Latin or French, any links connecting it with the early efforts of the actual English drama,—and this though it abounds in satire[2]. The two religious dramas of Guillaume Herman and Etienne (Stephen) Langton which allegorise the text from Holy Scripture, 'Righteousness and peace have kissed one another,' &c., written, the former by order of an ecclesiastic (the Prior of Kenilworth), the latter by a clerical author, are indeed both in French; but they are to be regarded as essentially aftergrowths of the religious literary drama, already traced to its proper source.

The minstrels not the originators of the drama in England.

The reason is plain why the English drama could not as a popular growth spring from a foreign literary origin. In the century after the Norman Conquest our own literature seemed to be dead; what survived of it clung in form as in language to an obsolete model (the Saxon Chronicle); and the Norman minstrels, or the Englishmen who adopted the language of the conquerors in order to ingratiate themselves with them, sang for no English ears. I have not

[1] Warton shows (sec. vi.) how the monks invited the minstrels to their festivals, and through them became acquainted with romantic stories. In return, the minstrels may have occasionally witnessed the performance of a religious drama.

[2] In Wright's *Anglo-Latin Lyrical Poets of the Twelfth Century* (London, 1872) there seems to be no reference to dramatic representations, and (with the exception perhaps of the allegorical figures in the *Liber Alani de Planctu Naturae*) no element calling to mind the early drama. There is nothing dramatic in any of the works of Walter Mapes. In the *Reliquiae Antiquae*, i. 134, there is a slight dialogue between the Norman barons (date of MS. about 1300) which cannot fairly be called dramatic. I am not acquainted with *le Petit-Plet* and the *Spring and Winter* mentioned by Klein, iv. 105; but I demur to the *Debate between the Body and Soul* being considered dramatic; nor can I conceive of its being (as Klein supposes of these dialogues) acted by Norman *jongleurs* in the castle before knights and ladies. Neither this dialogue, nor such as the *Owl and the Nightingale*, or the *Thrush and the Nightingale*, can have been composed with any dramatic intention.

ought to deny that there may have been *jongleurs* who already at an early period sought the favour of English audiences or of English spectators. Outside the monasteries, where, under the names of *joculatores*, *lusores*, *mimi*, *citharistae*, they were made welcome, and sang their *gestes* (hence *jestours* in Chaucer), they would not have been intelligible to English ears; nor would the practice of translating the pieces of French minstrels into English seem to date from much before the close of the thirteenth century[1]. I therefore conclude that the strolling class of performers, who addressed themselves to the people at large, sought to gratify either the ear by music pure and simple, or the eye by pantomimic or other exhibitions such as have degraded the word *joculatores* (*jongleurs*) into the significance attaching to its present English form (*jugglers*). In short, there was no opportunity for their combining with these dramatic elements that which supplies food for the mind, until the religious drama furnished them at once with subjects of the widest popularity, and possibly also with a reason for carrying on their dialogue either in the French, or, as it seems to me more likely, in the Latin tongue. But by the time they had more and more encroached upon the monks in the performance of religious plays, the period of amalgamation between the lower elements at least of the Norman and English population had set in; and when we find the *histriones* in full activity, we may regard them as to all intents and purposes Englishmen.

It is thus that I venture to answer the difficult question as to the relation of the minstrels towards the origin of our drama. Their influence upon it I cannot in any sense regard as a primary one. The higher class of minstrels remained upon the whole unconnected with it; the lower, the *histriones*, greatly facilitated and speeded its popular beginnings, but are not to be in any essential sense numbered among its originators.

We have thus briefly traced to their historical source two contributory streams: the current which was to

[1] Robert de Brunne (1260–1340) complains of the strange and quaint English of these translations. Warton, sec. iii.

absorb them descended from a more august height than either.

The main source of the modern drama.

The liturgy of the Mass the original mystery.

It is well known what was the meaning attached by the Greeks to the term *liturgy*,—a service performed by an individual or an association of individuals on behalf of the community. This expression came to be applied by the Christian Church to the public performance of a religious office of paramount significance. The celebration of the Eucharist constituted that part of the religious worship of the early Christians to which only the instructed or initiated believers were admitted, while both the unbelieving and the mere catechumens were excluded from it. In this part of the worship alone the highest truths of Christianity were adverted to or discussed; hence in the Eastern Church this office was called the 'divine' or the 'mystical' liturgy[1]. As visibly representing the work of redemption and renewing it as a *mystery*, *i.e.* in its inner and moral significance, it must at all times have been regarded as of unequalled importance. In the West it received and generally retained the name of '*missa*,' or mass; and from the time of Gregory the Great (590–664), though the particular Roman office may be of even earlier origin, constituted the central act of public Christian worship. 'In the wide dimensions,' says an ecclesiastical historian[2], 'which in course of time the Mass assumed, there lies a grand, we are almost inclined to say an *artistic* idea. A dramatic progression is perceptible in all the symbolic processes, from the appearance of the celebrant priest at the altar (*introitus*) and the confession of sins, to the *Kyrie Eleison*, and from this to the grand doxology (*Gloria in Excelsis*), after which the priest turns with the *Dominus vobiscum* to the congregation, and calls upon it to pray (*Oremus*). We next hear the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel. Between the two actions or acts intervenes the *graduale* (a chant), during which the deacon ascends the ambon

[1] Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, i. 3; 31.

[2] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, ii. 65–66. It is worth remembering that in the execution of the *Ordo Romanus* the various Churches preserved certain national peculiarities. Ebert, p. 18.

(*lectorium*). With the Halleluia concludes the first act (*missa catechumenorum*); and then ensues the Mass in a more special sense (*missa fidelium*), which begins with the recitation of the Creed of the Church (*Credo*). Again a *Dominus vobiscum* and a prayer, whereupon the *offertorium* (offering), and, accompanied by further ceremonies, the *consecration*; and the mysterious change of substance takes place amidst the adoration of the congregation and the prayer for the quick and the dead; then the touching chant of the *Agnus Dei*, followed by the *communion* itself, which is succeeded by prayer and thanksgiving, the salutation of peace, and the benediction.'

Now, without refining too much,—a danger undoubtedly to be avoided in the discussion of this subject,—it is obvious that we have in this liturgy of the Mass a dramatic action, in part pantomimically presented, in part aided by both epical and lyrical elements. It has a beginning which is at the same time an explanation of its cause, a central action (the immolation and consecration), and a close. The remark seems therefore strictly correct, that for the step from the mystery of the liturgy to the liturgical mystery-drama nothing is needed but the dramatic *intention*[1]. So long as the reality of the central action (for such the immolation possesses for the believing spectator) causes everything else to be regarded as merely an adjunct to it, the mystery will preponderate over the drama; so soon as the adjuncts begin in any degree to emancipate themselves from their original character as such, the play will prevail over the mystery.

Its dramatic elements;

The *pantomimical* element in the Mass lies in the first instance in the action of the officiating priest. I abstain from enquiring too closely into the typical significance of the several things *done* by the priest in the course of the liturgy, of the cruciform gestures of his arms, the breaking of the bread, the dipping of the bread in the cup, the communication.

The *epical* element lies in the portions of Scripture read to the congregation, of which there are two kinds—the

[1] Klein, iv. 2.

Apostle or Prophet (Epistle) and the Gospel. Originally it would seem as if it had been customary to read portions of the Law, Prophets, Psalms, Epistles, and Gospels; but in the Western Church the Lessons from the Old Testament were often omitted, and the Psalm was then placed between the Epistle and Gospel. Even at the present day, the Roman liturgy on particular days prefixes Lessons from the Old Testament to the Epistle and Gospel, and these lessons are followed by a Psalm[1].

The *lyrical* element is to be sought in those portions of the service which are prescribed by the *antiphonary*, as the portions of Scripture to be read are prescribed by the *lectionary*. The *antiphonary* furnished the anthems or verses for the beginning of the Communion, the offertory and other salient passages of the office[2]. The congregation is in these passages expected to join by certain *responses*; and the element of dialogue is accordingly introduced into the liturgy. This practice is further fostered by its introduction into the supplementary service of prayer termed the *litany*; these litanies either preceded or followed the liturgy, and they were generally accompanied by *processions*. In the litany was introduced, in the Western Church from about the seventh or eighth century, the invocation of saints[3], lyric addresses to whom accordingly constituted from a comparatively early period a part of religious worship.

their development;

There were thus three directions in which it was possible for the liturgy to develope itself and to admit popular elements. The language of the service being in Latin, it was likely soon to seek new attractions for the eye as well as for the ear. At a very early period, certainly already in the fifth century, it was usual to add to public worship on special occasions living pictures of scenes from the Gospel, such as the Adoration of the Magi, the Marriage of Cana, the Death of the Saviour[4]. Still earlier, great attention seems to have been paid

[1] Palmer, *u. s.* ii. 48. [2] *Ib.* 308.

[3] Palmer, i. 279. In the reigns of Edward VI and Elisabeth all processions, except the perambulations on Rogation days, were prohibited. *Ib.* ii. 97 (*Supplement*). [4] Klein, iv. 11; Ebert, p. 18.

to the antiphonary songs; and when the *tableaux* were introduced, such songs doubtless accompanied their presentation. That into these *tableaux* a certain degree of action gradually introduced itself, was of its nature inevitable. But *tableaux* and songs only formed a portion, an illustrative portion if I may use the term, of the mystery of which the liturgy itself was the expression. Thus, in a special treatise composed by John of Bayeux, bishop of Avranches, on the liturgy of the Norman Church in the eleventh century, the mysteries represented in church are viewed as a component part of the liturgy[1].

and combination.

The liturgical mystery.

It cannot be stated with certainty when the important step was first taken of connecting the epical part of the liturgy with the spectacular and to some degree pantomimical adjuncts, as well as with the lyrical, which it had already received. We are, however, told by an ecclesiastic of the tenth century, that it was customary on Christmas Day, after the *Te Deum*, to perform the *office* of the Shepherds, others of the same kind, such as that of the Infants (Innocents of Bethlehem), the Star, the Sepulchre, being celebrated each in its season[2]. Thus these offices must have been brought into direct connexion with the Gospel of the day, of which in fact they represented a *visible* repetition, in which as a matter of course priests were the actors and the church the scene, while the part played by the congregation was confined to lyrical responses at particular passages of the proceedings. The text however, as spoken by the actors themselves, was short, containing only sufficient to connect the steps in the action, and consisting to a great degree of questions and answers. The earliest Latin mysteries of this description preserved to us are to be ascribed to the twelfth, or perhaps even to the eleventh century; they are of course in Latin, and they are of French origin. Their subjects are taken from the New Testament and from the legendary history of St. Nicholas[3]. The three Latin plays ascribed to Hilarius, a monk of English

[1] Klein, iv. 3.

[2] See the quotation from Gerbert Wilkens, *u. s.*, p. 5, *note* 4; cf. Ebert, *u. s.*

[3] They are printed in Wright's *Early Mysteries*.

birth and the pupil of Abelard, are, if his, of the former half of the twelfth century; they are in Latin, with occasional French refrains; their subjects are partly Scriptural, partly from the legend of the same saint. These are the earliest religious dramas preserved to us; for there seems no reason to assign an earlier date to the mystery, partly in a half-Provençal dialect, of *The Foolish Virgins*[1].

Its progress

In the further developement of the mystery-drama two tendencies are to be noted, the progress of which to their inevitable consequences may be said to comprehend the entire history of the subject. The one is the gradual substitution of the vernacular for the Latin tongue. This substitution was at first confined to the choral responses of the congregation; it was then introduced into the speeches of certain of the characters (as they may be called) in the action of the mystery-drama. This mixture occurs in the plays of Hilarius, and in the mystery of *The Foolish Virgins* aforesaid. The French mystery of *La Resurrection* (twelfth century) is regarded as the first religious drama in the vulgar tongue; its character is described as distinctly recitative, *i.e.* it was not represented by action, but by persons standing still[2]. The second is the joining together of a whole series of mysteries on different incidents of the Gospel history into one[3]. This joining together is at first only roughly effected; its final result is the *Collective Mystery*, the form in which the principal English efforts of the mystery-drama appear.

The collective mystery.

Before noticing these, it is, however, necessary to add yet one or two more general remarks. A legitimate

[1] Wright's *Early Mysteries*. The Easter mystery published at Tours by Luzarche, and described by Moland, *Origines Litt. de la France*, p. 132 *seqq.*, is a good specimen of the earliest kind of mystery-drama, performed in the various parts of the church, the congregation joining in the concluding *Te Deum*.

[2] Klein, iv. 14. Ebert, p. 19, points out how since the eleventh century the vernacular had by means of the so-called *Epistolæ fazcitæ* been introduced into the liturgy itself. These were songs generally referring to the martyrdom of St. Stephen. See *Ancien Théatre Franç.* vol. i. Introd. p. vii.

[3] Already perceptible in the earliest German (Freisingen) mysteries described by Wright, p. viii, and Wilkens (who thinks the date of the eleventh century the earliest that can be assumed for them, and a later date more probable), p. 5 *seqq*. They are partly in Latin, partly in German.

distinction is usually drawn between *Mysteries*, *Miracle-plays*, and *Moral-plays* or *Moralities*. Properly speaking, *Mysteries* deal with Gospel events only, their object being primarily to set forth, by an illustration of the prophetic history of the Old Testament, and more particularly of the fulfilling history of the New, the central mystery of the Redemption of the world, as accomplished by the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection. *Miracle-plays*, on the other hand, are concerned with incidents derived from the legends of the Saints of the Church. Lastly, *Morals* teach and illustrate the same religious truths, not by direct representation of scriptural or legendary events and personages, but by allegorical means, abstract figures of virtues or qualities being personified in the characters appearing in these plays.

Mysteries, miracles, and morals distinguished.

Of these three species there are frequent combinations; and in England, at all events, no accurate distinction was drawn between mysteries and miracle-plays; indeed, the former name was not in use in this country[1]. When the religious drama reached England, the two species had already to some extent combined; and, in fact, the earliest French religious plays which we possess are partly of one kind, partly of the other. But the origin of the miracle-play was to a great degree literary, as has been already shown; and in England the first miracle-plays proper of which we know accordingly precede the first mysteries proper of which traces are preserved to us. The moralities occur in early specimens, such as the literary dramas of Herman and Langton, already mentioned; but it was not till a comparatively late date (probably the earlier half of the fifteenth century) that, under the influence of the epical allegories which were then popular in English as well as French literature, they were popularly cultivated. Their origin was therefore proper to themselves, and will be briefly discussed as such below; but at the time when they began to flourish in England, the form of the mysteries and miracles was already so far advanced

Nature of their combination in England.

[1] See Collier, ii. 123, *note*. In France, the term *mystère* was applied to all religious plays indiscriminately from the fifteenth century. Ebert, *u.s.*

and fixed, that it was necessarily borrowed by the moralities. Elements of the moralities, abstract figures, will however frequently be found to occur in the mysteries and miracle-plays.

The drama begins to emancipate itself from the Church.

The main elements which contributed to the progress of the popular drama which had arisen out of the liturgy have thus been established. It is unnecessary to pursue their operation in detail. In the natural order of things, in consequence of the greater length of the plays, their more elaborate paraphernalia, and the increasing number of the spectators, representations began to take place outside the church as well as inside[1], and in the vulgar tongue in preference to the Latin. Plays treating of the legends of saints were less dependent on their connexion with the service of the Church than mysteries proper; and as lay associations, guilds and schools in particular, had each its saintly patron, they soon began to act plays in his honour in their own halls or the vicinity of them. The services of professional mimes could hardly fail to be employed. Lastly, as the clergy allowed the introduction into the religious dramas acted or superintended by them of scenes and characters of a more or less trivial description, as certain characters acquired a conventional and marked manner of representation or speech (*e. g.* Herod), as the devils and their chief advanced to prominence, and had to be made hideous or contemptible in order to inspire instantaneous antipathy, the comic element could not fail to assert itself. Here the traditions of popular entertainments would, in France at all events, be at hand with their influence, and contribute to give a profane character to what could no longer be regarded as essentially a part of religious worship.

Such—and I think it unnecessary to follow the process into its details—were some of the causes contributing to the inevitable result that the clergy began to lose their control over the performances which their order had originated, and to become seriously divided as to their expediency.

Attempted reaction.

A memorable attempt was however made in the middle of

[1] This was ordered by Pope Innocent III in 1210. Hagenbach, ii. 414.

the thirteenth century to sanctify more emphatically to a religious use a popular taste which was fast outgrowing the purposes for which it had been at first encouraged. This attempt connects itself with the endeavour to bring home to popular consciousness the central doctrine of the Church of Rome. I refer of course to the institution by Pope Urban IV, in the year 1264, of the festival of Corpus Christi, the office for which was composed by the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, of whose teaching it has been said that he 'sought to make the supernatural significance of the doctrine of the Church accessible to the natural intelligence, without at the same time in any way analysing that doctrine into something natural or comprehensible[1].' But Pope Urban having died in the same year, the celebration of the festival was interrupted for nearly half a century[2]; until it was renewed, under Pope Clement V, by a decree of the Council of Vienne, so memorable in political as well as ecclesiastical history[3]. The special features of the festival of Corpus Christi were the distinct proclamation of the Creed of the Church, and the exhibition in procession of the symbol of the mystery of the Incarnation. With this latter feature the plays which it became usual to exhibit on this festival seem to have been closely connected; hence the term *processus* is frequently applied to the plays themselves. But on the developement of the drama the fact that the mystery to which the festival was sacred was not in itself immediately adapted for representation, would appear to have had the effect of extending the range and suggesting a wider choice of dramatic subjects; especially towards the close of the Middle Ages, Old Testament subjects were treated with great frequency at Corpus Christi.

Origin of Corpus Christi plays.

1264.

1311.

The institution of this festival seems to have exercised a very marked influence upon the early progress of the drama in the country in which alone I propose to trace its course.

General progress of the early religious drama,

[1] Hagenbach, ii. 425.

[2] It was the troublous time of the *Interregnum* in the Empire (1254–1271) and of the commencement of the struggles between the Papacy and France, which ended with the transfer of the Holy See to Avignon (1309).

[3] It abolished the Order of the Templars.

What has been already said must suffice as a general introduction to my special subject. The drama of other countries will henceforth only be noticed in so far as it contributed with more or less directness to shape the course of our own. It may however be briefly stated, that from reasons already indicated, the drama in France already in the thirteenth century almost entirely emancipated itself from the Church; and that the French theatrical associations, whose tendencies were not only rival but *conflicting*, continued in activity down to the period of the Renascence, when under literary influences a new era began to open, endeavouring, as is usual with new eras in France, to make *tabula rasa* of what had gone before. The early religious dramas of both Italy and Spain are considerably later in date, so far as we are acquainted with them, than either the French or our own. No Italian mystery has been preserved from an earlier date than 1243; no Spanish from either the thirteenth or the fourteenth century, though it is clear that such existed in a variety of forms[1]. On the other hand, in Germany there seems no doubt that both the plays which it was usual to perform at Christmas and those which were generally exhibited at Easter belong in their origin to about the twelfth century. In the Middle Ages Easter was by far the more popular as a season for dramatic performances,—a circumstance to be attributed not only to obvious considerations of temperature, but also to the fact that Easter

in France,

Italy,

Spain,

and Germany.

[1] The *origines* as well as the developement of both the Italian and the Spanish drama have been traced with extreme fulness by Klein in the fourth and succeeding volumes of his work, to which I have already frequently referred. The labour which its author has bestowed on it is so enormous, that he may well be pardoned occasionally eccentricities both of expression and combination. That his general view of the origin of the drama is just, I venture at the same time to believe; and I have not scrupled to adopt some of his theories.—For a brief account of the origin of the Spanish drama, as springing from religious sources and wholly unconnected with the ancient Roman theatre, see also Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, chap. xiii.—It is, by the bye, well known that in Spain mysteries are by no means things of the past; I remember comparing with the Oberammergau Play the *Sacrada Passio y Mort de Nostre Senyor Jesu-Crist*, which professed to be prepared for representation in the principal theatres of the kingdom, being published (at Barcelona) by a dignified ecclesiastic. The Spanish play seemed to me much inferior to the recent versions of the German.

is by far the more ancient festival in the Christian Church, and that in dramatic significance the subject of the Passion far surpasses that of the Nativity. Corpus Christi plays are likewise to be noted; while the Ascension, Assumption, and Whitsuntide plays are to be regarded as extensions of the Easter plays. It is curious, by the way, that the advent of the Reformation reversed the relative popularity of the Easter and Christmas plays, partly perhaps in consequence of the importance attached in the former to the laments of the Blessed Virgin. With the revival of Catholic feeling in the seventeenth century, and the continued cultus of the Blessed Virgin in this and the eighteenth, the Easter plays recovered their preferential position, being now tinged with a sentimental character, which found its vent in allegories and in external effects, while the incident of the Resurrection itself was treated with relative slightness. The first edition of the Oberammergau Play, the peculiar origin of which is well known, though due to Benedictine monks, seems to have borne unmistakeable traces of the influence of the Jesuit school of theology, which was paramount in Bavaria and in Catholic Germany generally in the latter half of the Thirty Years' War. By the side of the mysteries proper the Germans in the fourteenth century became familiar with plays celebrating the legends of saints—such as St. Catharine and St. Dorothy—*miracles* in the stricter sense of the term; and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it became usual to select from legendary lore subjects of historical importance, whether general or local, so that the transition to the historical drama became easy. While the *moral* element finds a place in the history of the early German drama, it only exceptionally connects itself with the lyrical and epical poetry of the minstrels; and its growth is in this respect analogous in its earlier stages to our own. But the developement of the German drama from the ecclesiastical basis, where like ours it had its beginnings, was less fortunate. The attempts made in those parts of the nation which were seized by the spirit of the Reformation to put new wine into the old bottles, and to create a national drama, though interesting and connecting themselves as

will be seen with the English drama in its greatest period, remained practically abortive as a literary movement [1].

The religious drama in England.

The peculiar political and social condition in which England found itself in the period succeeding the Norman Conquest could not fail directly to affect the developement experienced in this country by the Norman gift of the religious drama. At the time when the drama came among us—for I have already shown that before the Norman Conquest we had neither possessed it nor shown any tendency towards it—there is every reason to believe that mysteries and miracle-plays as popular performances still remained in the hands of the clergy, while miracle-plays alone were occasionally produced as literary works by ecclesiastical hands. But there existed in England after the Conquest a class of performers of a professional character, who must naturally have been prompt to seize upon a popular form of entertainment and to impress the possibility of its reproduction practically upon the secular public. Ecclesiastics, therefore, or persons connected with the Church, introduced the drama into England; they composed the first dramas produced in England, and performed them themselves, or caused them to be performed by their pupils; but the *histriones* soon followed in their footsteps, and members of the community at large in the footsteps of the *histriones*.

The miracle of St. Catharine, 1110 *circ.*

The first play of which we have nominal mention as acted in England is, as has been already stated, the *Ludus de S. Katharina*, which the Norman Geoffrey, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Albans, caused to be acted at Dunstaple about the year 1110. Of this play we know nothing, except that the writer who mentions it (Matthew Paris in his *Lives of the Abbots of St. Albans*) says that it was a play of the kind 'quem *miracula* vulgariter appellamus.' Matthew Paris wrote about 1240; and as there is no reason

[1] Of the early German religious plays an account will be found in Dr. C. Wilkens' *Geschichte der geistlichen Spiele in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1872). I may here add that it would seem from an interesting article in the *Academy* (April 15th, 1873), by Mr. A. J. Patterson, that in Hungary there is a strange gap between the liturgical mystery and the secular drama, apparently unbridged as in the Romance and Teutonic West by the dramatic mystery.

to suppose that any progress had taken place in the miracle-plays in the interval, we are justified in assuming that this play of St. Katharine was essentially of the same kind as the religious plays which we possess in Latin and in French from the twelfth century. Its subject, and the fact that it was acted by the pupils of the school which Geoffrey 'expected,' and acted by them in 'copes' borrowed for the purpose, connects it with the literary religious drama which had flourished in the monasteries since the time of Hroswitha; whether it was in Latin or in French it is impossible to determine. As the play was not (according to the testimony of Bulaeus) regarded as a novelty, we may assume that in the English monasteries after the Conquest such plays were not unfrequently acted; and at first at least they must have usually been in Latin.

London miracles, 1170–1182.

William Fitz-Stephen, who wrote about half a century before Matthew Paris, states, in reference to the period of about 1170–1182, that London, instead of theatrical spectacles and scenic plays (such as those of Rome *i.e.*), has plays of a more sacred character: *repraesentationes miraculorum quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu repraesentationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum*[1]. Here again it is impossible to determine in what language these plays were composed; nor does it appear by whom they were performed; the probability must be in favour of Latin plays, acted by ecclesiastics. In 1258 however a prohibition occurs[2] of the plays of *histriones* being seen, heard, or performed before abbot or monks; which proves that the itinerant performers had by this time seized the new opportunity. Whether they performed in English cannot be determined; it seems however probable; and if so, it may be regarded as a curious coincidence that in a year when the native tongue was receiving an acknowledgment of a wholly unprecedented character—1258 is the year of the *English* Proclamation made in the name of Henry III—the clerical authorities should, in one instance at least, be

Professional players, 1258.

[1] Quoted from the *Vita S. Thomae Archiep. et Mart.* (Becket) by Collier, i. 1.
[2] Quoted from the *Annales Burtonenses, ib.* p. 5.

found interfering with these humble but effective agents of its progress.

This period may therefore be regarded as that in which the drama was in England still mainly under the control and management of the clergy. The miracle-plays acted by them or under their superintendence were doubtless, whether written in Latin or in French, of French origin, and differed in no essential degree from their prototypes.

Isolated early moralities, 1150–1200.

The plays, already mentioned, produced by Guillaume Herman and Etienne (Stephen) Langton, in the middle and towards the close of the twelfth century, were the earliest specimens produced on English soil, though in the French language, of the theological morality; in them there seems to be no element leading onwards to a national growth, and the later moralities start from a fresh basis.

The clergy and the miracle-plays.

The direct connexion between the clergy and the miracle-plays continued, if not quite to the last, at all events till the period when those plays were about to be superseded by the beginnings of the regular drama; Bishop Bale, the author of our first Chronicle History, was the author of our last miracle-play, or at least of the last preserved to us (in 1538); and the *lusores*, *minstrells*, and *jocatores* enjoyed the 'adjutorium Conventus' in the reigns both of Henry VII and Henry VIII[1]. But different opinions were held at different times among the clergy, both as to the propriety of these plays in themselves, and as to the propriety of participation in them by ecclesiastics. The *Manuel des Pechiez*, by William of Waddington, translated into English by Robert Mannyng of Brunne in 1303, under the title of *Handlyng Synne*, states that the clergy are forbidden to 'make or se' miracles, but that they may 'play the Resurreccyn' in church, and the Nativity[2]. From the fourteenth century we have a sermon, by no means devoid of power, against 'miraclis playinge' in general[3]; and from the fifteenth (in which however Lydgate, the monk of

[1] Collier, ii. 236; *ib.* 143. As to Bishop Bale vid. chap. ii. I shall give my reasons below for thinking that the Towneley and Coventry plays were written by monks.

[2] Collier, i. 6.

[3] *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ii. 42 *seqq.*

Bury, composed pageants 'from the Creation') a satirical poem against the 'free mynours' and their miracle-plays, in which the pious confidence is expressed that the friars will in due season burn in reality, as they now occasionally burn in character, in a 'cart made al of fyre,' on the stage[1]. In the sixteenth century, Cardinal Wolsey interfered with the playing of monks; and in 1542 Bishop Bonner prohibited all plays in churches in his diocese; but the practice seems to have lingered on till near the close of the century[2].

Miracle-plays performed by lay companies from 1268 (?).

But, as has been already stated, an impulse was given by the Church itself to the performance of religious plays by the institution of the festival of Corpus Christi; and it was very soon after this event that, according to a doubtful tradition, miracle-plays were performed in an English town by the trading-companies. How soon the example of Chester was followed, or indeed whether it was anticipated, by other English towns, we do not know; the first mention of plays exhibited by the companies at Coventry is as late as 1416. From the close of the thirteenth and through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the institution flourished in a large number of English towns—at Chester, Coventry, York, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Leeds, Lancaster, Preston, Kendal, Wymondham, Dublin, and London; the performers being usually the members of the trading-companies, at times other bodies, in London the parish clerks[3].

Before proceeding to illustrate the nature of plays of this description which have been preserved to us, it is necessary to make one or two remarks more or less applicable to all.

Their names.

Their usual name was *plays*, *miracle-plays* or *miracles*; the term *mysteries* not being employed in England. Yet their character is essentially that of the plays termed *mysteries* in France; and there is no distinction to be drawn in manner of treatment between the popular mysteries and miracles (if we thus continue to distinguish them according

[1] *Reliquiae Antiquae*, i. 322. [2] Collier, ii. 145–6.

[3] In Cornwall miracle-plays were performed in the native Cymric dialect at an early date. Three of these, the language of which is stated to belong to the fourteenth century, have been preserved and edited by Mr. Edwin Norris. See Morley, *English Writers*, I². 748.

to their subject) in England. They contain elements of the *moralities*, and in one instance we meet among them with a morality proper, according to the definition given above. But as the moralities have an origin of their own, though their form was moulded by the example of the miracles, they will more appropriately be treated of separately.

The individual plays were usually called *pageants*, a name derived from the vehicle on which they were exhibited. The word is spelt in every imaginable way, but as to its derivation from the root of the Latin *pango* and the Greek πήγνυμι (whence *pagina*, *pegma*, πῆγμα) there can be no doubt.

Their collective character.

In their origin many of the individual plays are doubtless founded on French models; others are taken directly from the text of Scripture, from the Apocryphal Gospels, and from the legends of the saints. But the distinctive characteristic of the English religious plays is their combination into *collective series*, exhibiting the whole course of Bible history, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment; these as such are essentially original national creations, not translations or even indirect copies of French or any other foreign works[1].

Method of their performance.

The method of performance of these plays has been frequently described; nor is it part of my purpose to enter into a detailed description of it. One extract will suffice instead of many to give a general notion of the general machinery and apparatus of our primitive stage. 'The maner of these playes were, every company had his pagiant, or p'te, w^{ch} pagiants weare a high scafold w'th 2 rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon 4 wheeles. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all behoulders might heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They begane first at the Abay gates, and when the first pagiante was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the Mayor, and so to

[1] From a MS. extract from Ebert's *Jahrbuch*, vol. i., kindly communicated to me by Dr. Breymann. To the French *Mystère du vieil Testament* parts of the Chester Plays were probably indebted; and this may be regarded as to some degree constituting an exception to the statement in the text.

every streete, and soe every streete had a pagiant playing before them at one time, till all the pagiantes for the daye appointed weare played, and when one pagiant was neere ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete, that soe they mighte come in place thereof, exceedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pagiantes afore them all at one time playeinge togeather; to se w'ch playes was great resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes[1].'

Scenery and costume.

It seems to have been usual to prefix to the plays a species of general prologue spoken by heralds of one kind or another. The performance was not always strictly confined to the stage; we shall meet with horsemen riding up to the scaffold and taking part in the action; and in one of the plays[2] there is the direction: 'Here Erode ragis in the pagond and in the strete also.' As a rule, however, the moveable stage sufficed; nor is there any proof that it was, as in France, divided into three platforms with a dark cavern at the side of the lowest, appropriated respectively to the Heavenly Father and his angels, to saints and glorified men, to mere men, and to souls in hell. Hell-mouth, however, was an English as well as a French institution; and great care was doubtless bestowed on presenting it with more or less elaboration. Fire was occasionally displayed within it ('it^{m},' says an entry relating to the Draper's Pageant at Coventry[3], 'payd for kepying of fyer at hell mothe . . . iiij*d.*'); but the introduction of 'yerthequakes' seems to belong to the degeneracy of the religious drama. Of the costumes we have sufficiently detailed accounts; they doubtless differed very considerably in richness, in part they were conventional; divine and saintly personages were distinguished by gilt hair and beards; Herod was dressed as a Saracen; the demons were hideous heads[4];

[1] Archdeacon Rogers' (d. 1595) account of the Whitsun plays at Chester, quoted by Sharp, *Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries anciently performed at Coventry*, pp. 17–18.

[2] The *Pageant of Shearmen and Taylors* at Coventry, in Sharp, p. 107.

[3] *Ib.* p. 73.

[4] Hodge, in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, gives a sufficiently distinct description of the Devil, as he appeared in these plays. Cf. Sharp, p. 58.

the souls wore white and black coats according to their kind, and the angels gold skins and wings[1].

Abundant details of this description will be found in Mr. Sharp's account of the Pageants performed by the Coventry trades, together with all necessary information as to the cost of the performances. But it is perhaps in general advisable not to dwell too much on these external points, and thereby indulge the sense of the grotesque, at the risk of overlooking the more important features common to all or nearly all these plays. It was not, except as will be seen in occasional or incidental points, any but a serious spirit which pervaded them. The ludicrous, where it was introduced, was far more generally introduced as a foil, than pursued as a main object; and of what strikes us as ludicrous, most is only homely and *naïf*. The chief interest of these plays, as has been well said[2], was in England, as in Germany, tragic. This was in thorough accordance with the temperament of our nation, and with the character of its native literature. The gaiety of France, which is the gaiety of Chaucer, was in England only domesticated in a class; and that class was either by descent or by association of a foreign growth. At the same time the grossness of many passages in these plays is of indigenous origin; and indicates the tardy progress of aesthetic culture, rather than an absence of moral sentiment.

Collective mysteries.

Of English *Collective Mysteries*, as they may be appropriately termed, three series have been preserved. In the form in which they have come down to us, these three series appear to belong respectively to the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the sixteenth century. I proceed to say a few words concerning each series, in the chronological order indicated.

1300–1600 *circ.*

Towneley Plays.

To the *Towneley Plays*, or *Mysteries*[3], as it has been

[1] At Oberammergau, where the costumes were said to be under the superintendence of Munich artists, the Angel at the Sepulchre wore white kid gloves.

[2] Morley, *English Writers*, i. 355.

[3] *The Towneley Mysteries* (Surtees Society, 1836). The editors are not named, but are stated by Lowndes to have been Dr. Raine and Mr. James Gordon. A good glossary accompanies the plays, which are preceded by a brief Introduction; the absence of notes is to be regretted.

usual to term them, an even earlier date than the fourteenth century may perhaps be assigned; but such evidence as that of a passing allusion to costume[1] is hardly sufficient ground for a conclusion as to chronology. The supposition (of Douce) that these plays were composed in the reign of Henry VI or Edward IV seems to have been formed on general grounds. The curious circumstance, that in the *Magnus Herodes* King Herod ends by saying that he 'can no more Franche' (he has previously used a French phrase: '*Yei ditizance doutance*,' *i.e. j'ai dit sans doutance*), may point to a French origin of this particular play; on the other hand, Herod, like Octavian in the Chester Plays (*vide infra*), may talk French in order to indicate his royal station, in which case the origin of this play can hardly be dated later than the fourteenth century[2].

The *Towneley Plays* take their name from the circumstance that the MS. in which they have been preserved formed part of the library of Towneley Hall in Lancashire. According to what appears to have been a tradition in the Towneley family, the volume had formerly belonged to the 'Abbey of Wildkirk near Wakefield.' Though there was never any such Abbey, nor so far as is known any place of the name near Wakefield, there is in that neighbourhood a place called Woodkirk, where there was a cell of Austin Friars, in dependance on the great house of St. Oswald at Nostel. There were fairs at Woodkirk from an early date up to the time of the Reformation; and as the local allusions in the plays are plentiful, they may be presumed to have been represented at the fairs in question. 'Merry' Wakefield, from which Woodkirk is only four miles distant, must have been a place very conservative of old customs[3]; and that the plays were acted by the guilds, would appear from the words 'Wakefelde Barkers,' 'Glover Pageant,' 'Fysher Pageant,'

[1] The 'hornyd headdress' of the lady referred to in the *Juditium*.

[2] See also below as to the French of the Nuncius in the Coventry *Shearmen and Taylors' Pageant*.

[3] See, for one, Greene's *George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield*.

inserted at the commencement of three among their number. The two last of these plays (which are out of their chronological order) are of a later origin than the rest; and in the *Johannes Baptista* a passage in honour of the Seven Sacraments is crossed through and marked, doubtless by a hand belonging to the times of the Reformation, as 'correctyd and not played.'

In general, there is no reason to doubt that the composition of the Towneley Plays is due to the friars of Woodkirk or Nostel. The ecclesiastical learning shown is, however, by no means ostentatiously introduced; the plays have an essentially popular character, and were emphatically written for the delectation of the multitude. Hence they are written in the dialect of the district where they were acted, and contain so endless a number of dialect words and forms—many of them undoubtedly of Scandinavian origin—that they are by no means easy reading. This is matter for regret; for it seems to me that they are infinitely superior to the *Coventry*, and even more enjoyable than the *Chester*, plays. Their dramatic vivacity, and in many parts their original humour, is most striking.

They are thirty-two in number, beginning with the *Creatio* and ending (for the last two are, as already observed, later additions) with the *Juditium*, *i.e.* Doomsday. Of the play of the *Shepherds*, which by reason of its homely characters and action and local allusions could not fail to be a favourite, there are two independent versions. But altogether the object of the writers of these plays was, more conspicuously than in the other series, to amuse and interest as well as edify; and the literary composition, though of course rude, is at times anything but contemptible. How effectively clear and concise *e.g.* is the narrative of St. Joseph in the *Annunciacio*[1]; how conversationally easy, yet dignified, is the beginning of the dialogue between the Blessed Virgin and St. Elisabeth in the *Salutacio Elisabeth*; and how adequate in diction are the opening reflections on the uncertainty of human life in the *Prima Pastorum*: 'Lord, what thay ar weylle that hens ar past,' &c. At

[1] p. 77 ff.

the same time, the most striking feature in these plays is undoubtedly the familiar and frequently comic treatment of sacred story with which they abound. Thus in the *Mactacio Abel* there is a great amount of farcical entertainment made out of Cain's boy or *garcio*, whom he addresses by the name of *Pike-harnes* (*i.e.* one who cannot keep his hands from picking and stealing the implements of labour), and whom he in vain proposes to manumit from serfdom, in order to shut his mouth. Cain's dispute with Abel, his defiance of God, and his mock proclamation of peace after his deed of blood, are all in a vein to move the laughter of the spectators.

In the *Processus Noe cum Filiis*[1], which follows, Noah begins with a kind of summary of the previous history of the world, and is then bidden by *Deus* to build the ark. He sets to work with great lamentations over the stiffness of his 'bak' and the starkness of his 'bonys;' and when the ark is built, he has the greatest possible difficulty in inducing his wife to enter[2]. In their quarrel, both Noah and his wife appeal to the sympathy of husbands or wives in the audience, and finally she is only brought to reason by being 'bet blo.' The *Abraham* represents with effective vivacity, and some genuine feeling, the sacrifice of Isaac. It is not till the *Processus Prophetarum* that action is exchanged for recitation; Moses recites the commandments (ending with—

'My name is callyd Moyses,
And have now alle good day');

and is followed by David, and *Sibilla propheta*. The introduction of the Sibyl is familiar to the mysteries; but here, after two Latin hexameters (not from Vergil), she merely recites a general Messianic prophecy. The *Pharao*, again, is full of action; the Egyptian king, like Caesar Augustus in the next play, swearing by 'Mahowne.' Caesar, according to our play, institutes the universal payment of a poll-tax in order to discover the child, whose approaching birth and royal destiny has been announced

[1] As to the term *processus* vide ante, p. 25.

[2] This legendary *passus* was an inexhaustible source of fun to the Middle Ages. Chaucer, as Mr. Wright (*Chester Plays*) reminds us, alludes to it in the *Millers Tale*.

to him. With the *Annunciacio* commences the series of New Testament plays, of which it is only necessary to advert to one or two. The two *Shepherd's Plays* are in the main comic pieces, especially the former, where the supper and drinking-bout of the shepherds are represented at great length. The illustrations to be derived from these plays of the manners and customs, the food, and the language of the labouring classes lie beyond my subject; nor is it necessary more than to notice the supreme oddity of the invocation by one of the shepherds, as he falls asleep before the appearance of the Angel, of

'Jesus o' Nazorus,
Crucyefixus,
Marcus, Andreas.'

The low humour—and it is very low—of these two plays doubtless constituted their special attraction for their audience[1]; but the modern reader will not fail to notice the really charming *naïveté* of the shepherds' worship of the Divine Babe, to whom they offer simple gifts—a ball, a bird, a 'bob of cherrys'—and whom they address in touchingly tender terms of endearment. The remaining plays, in particular those on the incidents of the Passion, are of course serious in tone; but there is throughout a strong desire to diversify the action by the introduction of minor characters—see *e.g.* the *Tortores* in the *Coliphizatio* (*i.e.* Buffeting), in the *Crucifixio*, and in the curious *Processus Talentorum*, which treats of Pilate's decision as to the garments of the Saviour. This play is opened by Pilate with an odd macaronic speech, half in Latin rhymes, and closes with a moral reflexion on the part of one of the *Tortores* on the vanity of 'dysyng,' and their dismissal with 'Mahowne's' blessing by Pilate. The next play is the *Extractio Animarum ab Inferno*, or the saving of the souls of the just—Adam and Eve, Isaias, John the Baptist, &c.—from limbo; the familiar topic of so much mediaeval

[1] I cannot resist quoting the 'advice to people about to marry' in the *Secunda Pastorum*:—

'Bot yong men of wowyng, for God that you boght,
Be welle war of wedyng, and thynk in youre thought
"Had I wyst" is a thing it servys of noght.'

poetry (the *Harrowing of Hell*). Belzabub and 'Rybald' appear in this as the counsellors of 'Sir Sathanas;' in general the Devil plays no frequent part in the *Towneley Plays*. The *Resurrectio*, the *Peregrini* (the Journey to Emmaus), the *Thomas Indiae* (the unbelief of St. Thomas), the *Ascencio Domini*, and the *Juditium*[1] close the series proper of this Collective Mystery.

Coventry Plays.

The principal part of the MS. containing the *Coventry Plays* was written in 1468; but the title which it now bears was only added by an authority of much later date, though there is no reason to suppose any error in it. This title terms the plays *Ludus Coventriae* s. *Ludus Corpus Christi*[2]; and that Corpus Christi plays were performed at Coventry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is beyond all doubt. There is a well-known allusion to them in one of Heywood's *Interludes*[3]; and the authentic information regarding this exhibition is stated to cover the years from 1416 to 1591[4]. Of the plays as they have reached us, one (the *Assumption of the Virgin*) is said to be written in a more recent hand than the rest, from which it certainly differs to some extent in manner.

As to the performance of these plays, it is known that they began on Sunday, at six in the morning; and that they were acted at other places besides Coventry[5]. I gather from a passage in the twenty-ninth of these plays (they are altogether forty-two in number), that they were not always all acted in one year[6]. In the copy preserved they are

[1] In the *Juditium* the most loquacious of the devils, *Tutivillus*, says that he is now 'master Lollar.' Mr. Collier, ii. 223, points out that this establishes 'that the writer was an enemy of Wickliffe's heresy, and probably an ecclesiastic;' but the date of the composition of the play is not determinable by the passage.

[2] *Ludus Coventriae. A Collection of Mysteries, formerly represented at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi.* Edited by J. O. Halliwell, F. R. S. (*Shaks. Soc. Publ.*, 1841).

[3] *The Four P's*:—

'For as good happe wolde have it of chaunce,
Thys devyll and I were of olde acqueyntaunce;
For oft, in the play of Corpus Christi,
He hath played the devyll at Coventry.'

[4] Collier, ii. 147. [5] *Ib.* 156.

[6] 'Be the leve and soferauns of allemyhthy God,
We intendyn to procede the mater *that we lefte the last yere*

preceded by a prologue, spoken by *vexillatores* (banner-bearers), and composed in a rather elaborate stanza. It is addressed to 'bothe more and less, gentyllys and yemanry of godly lyff lad;' and on several occasions in the plays the audience is addressed as 'sovereynes.' This last seems, however, a term of address frequently employed in the English mediaeval drama.

Though it has been remarked[1] that 'during the whole of the period from 1416 to 1591 there is not the slightest indication that the clergy in any way co-operated,' I cannot but think that the Coventry Plays show signs, if not of an ecclesiastical origin, at all events of the influence of ecclesiastical minds in their composition. The MS. preserved to us is supposed formerly to have been in the possession of the Grey Friars at Coventry; but it is rather of internal evidence that I am speaking. In the first place these plays show a remarkable familiarity with ecclesiastical literature. The promise of the prologue—

> 'Of holy writ this game shall bene
> And of no fablys be no way'—

is in so far kept that the plays are uniformly based either on the canonical books of Scripture, or on apocryphal Gospels[2]. But the Latin quotations from Vulgate or Liturgy are very numerous; hymns and psalms are frequently referred to or paraphrased[3]; and the Commandments are likewise paraphrased at great length (in *Moses and the Two*

> . . . . . .
> *The last yere we shewyd* here how oure Lorde for love of man
> Cam to the cety of Jherusalem mekely his deth to take;
> . . . . . .
> *Now wold we procede,* how he was browth than
> Beforn Annas and Cayphas,' &c.

At Oberammergau, it was formerly usual to alternate between the Old Testament and New Testament portions of the play now condensed into a collective whole. E. Devrient, *Das Passions-Schauspiel in O.*, p. 8.

[1] Collier, ii. 147.

[2] According to Halliwell, five on the *Apocryphal Gospel of the Birth of Mary*; three on the *Protevangelion* of St. James, one on the *Gospel* of Nicodemus. The story of Lamech the blind archer is a legendary amplification of *Gen.* iv. 23. Cf. Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, ii. 57.

[3] Mary's devotion to her 'sawtere' is very pleasingly expressed:—

> 'O holy Psalmys! holy book!
> Swetter to say than any ony!'

Tables). Even the shepherds refer in a very learned way to the Prophets, while in the play devoted to the latter we appear to have before us an intentional display of biblical learning. The Disputation in the Temple, again, would hardly have been written by a layman; and the Institution of the Eucharist is very elaborately treated. The emphasis with which the character and history of the Virgin are dwelt on, is very striking; all the incidents of her life, as presented by canonical or apocryphal Scripture, and as forming the occasions of Church festivals, are treated at length; her Birth, her Presentation and Betrothal, the Salutation and Conception, the *Trial of Joseph and Mary*, her visit with the two other Maries to the Sepulchre, finally her Assumption[1]. This may be regarded as a characteristic of the age in which the plays were written; but it may also be noted how constant a reference there is in them to the episcopal office, and how we are introduced in the *Trial* to an ecclesiastical court. There seems no irony in the advice to those summoned:

'loke ye rynge wele in your purs,
ffor ellys your cawse may spede the wurs;'

a passage which, so far as I can see, has no bearing, such as has been attributed to it, upon the question of payment for the performances of the plays[2].

But the chief reason for suspecting clerical hands to have been concerned in the composition of these plays, is the difference which as literary efforts, if the term be permissible, they exhibit when compared with the Chester Plays, doubtless written by tradesmen for tradesmen. The Coventry Plays, especially those taken from the Old Testament, are far more regular in form, and considerably in advance as to versification and diction. There is usually a species of expository prologue to each play, spoken by its principal character (Deus, Adam, Noah,

[1] Observe in the *Visit to Elisabeth* the passage:—

'Thus the Chirch addyd Maria and Jhesus her:
Who syth our ladyes sawtere dayly for a yer thus,
He hath pardon ten thousand and eyte hundred yer.'

[2] See Halliwell's note, p. 413.

Abraham, Jesus, Lazarus, Daemon); and the action itself seems to be managed with a view rather to close adherence to authority than to the production of immediate drastic effect. The action, at least in the Old Testament plays, is decidedly less lively than in the Chester series (compare *e.g.* the treatment of the subject of *Abraham and Isaac*); and if there is in general much less humour than in the Chester or Towneley Plays (some half-comic touches were apparently inevitable in connexion with St. Joseph as an old husband; the *Trial of Joseph and Mary* begins with a comic introduction, the people being called upon by English Christian and surnames; and Lucifer's description of fine dress is in a vein of popular satire on *le luxe effréné* practised by both sexes in that age), there is also upon the whole less coarseness. What indecency there is —and it is but little—strikes me as not altogether of the *naïf* kind. The shepherds, as already stated, address themselves to very different topics from those which they discuss in the earlier part of the corresponding Towneley and Chester Plays; and Herod, though his discourse is boastful and extravagant enough—the curious alliteration employed should be observed[1]—and though he swears a good deal by 'Mahownde[2],' cannot be said to rave, or to approach the border-line of the comic, except perhaps when, in ordering a banquet after the Massacre, he shows an ultra-royal disregard of expense—

'Thow that a lytel pint cost a m[l] pownde.'

Into a detailed examination of the Coventry Plays I must refrain from entering; but I may point out as worthy of commendation, the verse at the close of the *Adoration of the Shepherds;* the forcible speech of *Mors* in the *Slaughter of the Innocents;* the exceptional dramatic vigour

[1] Sathan also uses alliteration in *Pilate's Wife's Dream*, but not to such an extent as Herod. In either case the alliteration is not according to the early English rule, but a mere repetition in the same line of the same initial letter as often as possible.

[2] The soldiers at the sepulchre use the same oath. It is well known that after the Crusades the name of Mahomet had become typical of all false religious worships.

in parts of the *Trial of Christ;* and the simple effectiveness of the scene in which the Saviour after the Resurrection appears to Mary Magdalene[1]. And in one speech of the Blessed Virgin (in the *Betraying of Christ*) there is a gleam of tragic passion generally foreign to these early productions:—

'A! Jhesu! Jhesu! Jhesu! Jhesu!
Why xuld ye sofere this tribulacyon and advercyté?
How may thei fynd in here hertys yow to pursewe,
That nevyr trespacyd in no maner degré?
For nevyr thyng but that was good thowth ye,
Wherfore than xuld ye sofer this gret peyn?
I suppoce veryly it is for the trespace of me,
And I wyst that myn hert xuld cleve on tweyn.'

On the other hand, these plays, as a matter of course, abound in evidence of the rudely material conceptions of the age in which they were produced. Such is above all to be found in the repulsive reproduction in action of an extraordinary legend in the *Salutation*, and in the *Resurrection*. Compared with such instances of a tendency to reduce every mystery of the faith to a realised actuality, all mere anachronisms or oddities of ignorance[2] are insignificant. These mysteries teach, in their way, the lesson which the strange oaths of the Middle Ages teach in another,

[1] The authors here could not go wrong, if they followed the Sacred Text. There was perhaps nothing in the Oberammergau Play more wonderfully effective than the utterance by the Christ of the solitary word MARIA. In the Coventry Play he however subsequently briefly addresses her. In the corresponding Towneley Play the supreme effectiveness of the single word is missed; it is seized in the Digby MS. play of *Mary Magdalene*. I hardly venture to refer to the mysterious meaning which is suggested by the rapturous self-devotion of Mary Magdalene, though surely the suggestion is not incompatible with a reverential reading of the text of Holy Scripture itself. But the gentle reticence of the Gospel, which is followed by the mysteries, is more eloquent than the expansive rhetoric of such a poet as the author (said to be Gervase Markham) of *Marie Magdalen's Lamentations for the Losse of her Master* (see Grosart's *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library*, vol. ii), beautiful as the latter is in at least one passage. These poems are written in the spirit of Crashaw, from whom they are not very far distant in their date (1601). The confusion of the *Pharisees* and *Accusator* (in the *Woman taken in Adultery*) by the words, and by the writing in the sand, of the Saviour is also dramatically very effective.

[2] See for instance the strange geography of the prospect opened by Sathanas in the *Temptation*.

that a constant familiarity with the bodily presentment of sacred persons and things bred a material grossness in the whole aesthetical atmosphere of the people. What seems to us so profane in the readiness of our forefathers to allow the highest conceptions of religion to be associated with the crudest attempts at reproducing them in bodily form, was the result of an aesthetic rather than a religious deficiency; and if the mystics prepared the growth of a more spiritual age of religious life, the Renascence made impossible the continued depression of the sublimest of subjects to the level of a treatment satisfactory only to the uncultivated and unrefined.

But to return to the *Coventry Plays*, it should in conclusion be noticed, that though the characters represented in them are in the main actual personages, an element is already perceptible of abstract figures. *Contemplacio* appears in several plays to introduce the action as a kind of Prologus (so in the eighth, and again in the eleventh, where she announces the advent of the Redemption after 'ffowre thowsand sex undryd foure yere' of unexpiated sin) or to accompany it as a kind of Chorus. But other allegorical personages are also occasionally introduced; the Virtues of *Justicia, Misericordia, Veritas*, and *Pax*, who (in the eleventh play) hold conference with the Three Persons of the Trinity; and in the eighteenth *Mors*, who, after casting down Herod's pride, and delivering his dead body, and those of the two soldiers who form his executive, into the hands of *Diabolus*, moralises for the benefit of the audience on the suddenness and omnipotence of his agency. In the *Assumption* we meet with the figure of *Sapientia;* but this play may be of a later date than the rest. (The concluding play, *Doomsday*, in which there was room for other abstract figures, though none appear, is only a fragment.) Thus we notice in these plays, though they essentially are to be classed among the *mysteries*, an element of the *moralities*, to be treated of below. On the other hand, there is no evidence of any intention to treat the Devil as a comic character, though under various names—Lucifer, Belial, Satan, or Daemon—he largely participates

in the action of these plays, into which inferior angels of darkness are also occasionally introduced.

Chester Plays.

Of the *Chester Plays*[1], in the form at least in which they have come down to us, it seems unsafe to carry the date of origin further back than the earlier part of the fifteenth or the end of the fourteenth century, though tradition has assigned to them a much earlier date, attributing their composition to the period of the mayoralty of John Arneway (1268–1276). Whether or to what extent some of them were translations from French originals, remains doubtful; but several remarkable coincidences have been pointed out both by Mr. Collier and by Mr. Wright between the Chester Plays and French Mysteries, in particular the *Mystère du vieil Testament*[2]. In the main the plays follow the narrative of Scripture; but there are passages and episodes taken from legend, and at least one from an apocryphal Gospel. Many resemblances also have been found to the *Cursor Mundi*, which was itself a metrical version of the Old and New Testament, largely interspersed with mediaeval legend, and is dated (by Mr. Morris) about 1320.

These plays were acted at Whitsuntide, and, consisting

[1] *The Chester Plays.* Edited by Thomas Wright. (2 vols. *Shaksp. Soc.* 1843 and 1847.)

[2] The curious circumstance of the Emperor Octavian (in the play of *The Salutation and Nativity*) making a French speech, is regarded by Mr. Wright as 'only a picture of the age when French was the language of courtiers in the English court.' (Pilate, too, introduces himself with a few lines of French both in *The Passion* and in *The Resurrection.*) If so, it would have to be viewed as evidence of the antiquity of these Mysteries; for French had ceased to be the language of the English Court by the reign of Richard II, to whom Gower dedicated the first edition of his English poem, and for whose queen Chaucer destined one of his. Under the Lancasters (Chaucer certainly wrote for John of Gaunt, although the *Assemblie of Foules* may not have referred to his wedding) French had beyond a doubt vanished from the English Court; and Shakspere was quite justified in assuming an ignorance of it in Henry V. The transition period, marked by the works of Gower, is the reign of Edward III, in which it is therefore fair to suppose the play in question to have been, at latest, composed.—In the dramatic literature of India, Sanscrit is the language of gods and holy personages; Prâcrit of women and genii; but this distinction is more analogous to that familiar to the modern drama, where elevated persons so often use blank verse, while their inferiors talk in prose.

of twenty-five, occupied three days in the performance. It was preceded by banes (*i.e.* bans or proclamations), forming a species of prologue. In the banes preserved to us from the year 1600, when the production of these plays was revived, an apology is made for their rudeness, as dating from 'the tyme of ignorance, wherein we did straye;' and the subjects of the several plays, with the names of the guilds or companies of tradesmen and handicraftsmen to whom they were severally allotted, are enumerated. How the choice was made cannot of course be determined; but it can hardly be accident that the 'water-leaders and drawers of Deey' were charged with the performance of the story of 'Noy.'

The *Chester Plays* are unequal in merit, but in very few instances is there to be traced in them any attempt to supplement by pathos or humour in the language the force of the situations represented. *The Fall of Lucifer*, which commences the series, very simple and straightforward in its exposition—there is no mistake as to the fact that pride and pride alone is the cause of Lucifer's fall—is by no means ineffective, and is well connected with its successor. *The Creation and Fall, and Death of Abel* consists of two plays in one; first, the Creation is very dryly narrated by the Creator; and then Lucifer appears and takes the form of the serpent or 'edder' in order to tempt Eve. He chooses a form of temptation to which he thinks she must succumb, for, as he states with singular prescience—

> '— wemen the be full licoris,
> That will she not forsake.'

After the fall, the action is rapidly carried on by thirty years; and the sacrifice of the brothers Cain and Abel, and the murder of Abel, are represented. Cain, after being reproved by Deus, wanders forth, taking leave of his 'mame and dadd.' The lament of Eve pathetically closes the play. In *Noah's Flood* there is more originality of execution. God orders Noah to build the ark; and 'Sem,' 'Cam,' and 'Jaffette,' with their wives, set to work in tradesmanlike fashion with axe, 'hacchatt,' and 'hamer,' till the ark is built, and caulked and 'pyched' to boot.

Then ensues, as in the corresponding Towneley play, the difficulty of inducing Noah's wife to enter the ark. Though adjured 'by Sante John,' and subsequently admonished in less pleasant fashion, she long bides outside, even after the ark has been filled with birds and beasts (they are, according to the stage-direction, to be 'painted on the borde,' and are enumerated at length in the text[1]), among her 'gossippes,' who recklessly drink a 'pottill full of Malmsine good and stronge,' and sing a song ere they take their departure. At last, however, her sons induce her to enter; and the saving of Noah and his household is accomplished.

The Histories of Lot and Abraham is a far more didactic piece; an *expositor* (who seems to have attended on horseback) explains the application of the events to the New Testament. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is very fully elaborated, and to my mind the language here rises to pathos. *Balaam and his Ass*, in which a *Doctor* helps the action on by narrative, must have been a favourite play; the speaker of the banes evidently looked forward to it with particular relish. King Balacke, who appears *equitando*, calls on 'mightie Marse' against Israel; and then through a soldier summons Balaam. Permitted to make the journey, Balaam sets forth—but, 'what the devill! my asse will not goe;' he beats her ('*et nota quod hic oportet aliquis transformari in speciem asine*'), and 'she speaketh.' After Balaam has blessed Israel and converted the king, the Doctor concludes with more narrative, and a transition to the next play, which opens the series of New Testament subjects.

In the *Salutation and Nativity* it is only necessary to note the introduction of the characters of the Emperor Octavian and the Sibyl, and of her prophecy of the birth of Christ. This play contains a large admixture of legends;

[1] These enumerations of animals seem to have pleased the Middle Ages. The 'Bestiaries' were favourite vehicles of moral teaching. Readers of Chaucer will remember his list of birds in the *Assemblie of Foules*. Spenser imitated this enumerative tendency of Chaucer; see his list of trees in Bk. i. of the *Faëry Queene*. Chaucer's observation of birds calls Dante to mind (see Church's *Essay on Dante*).

that of Salome's incredulity and punishment, and that of the falling down of idols at Rome in the hour of the Nativity, which latter legend is narrated by an expositor. The *Play of the Shepherds*, which succeeds, is in its earlier and longer portion purely comic and exceedingly coarse. The drinking-bout and quarrels of the shepherds are seasoned with homely English allusions; and even the appearance of the star and the song of the Angels fail to subdue the animal spirits of Trowle. But the latter portion, the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem, and the offerings made by themselves and their boys to the Divine Babe, is managed with much simple effectiveness; and Trowle ends by repairing to an *ancker* (anchorite), while one of the shepherds becomes a pilgrim for the rest of his days.

The Three Kings connects itself with the play of *Balaam*, to whose prophecy reference is made at the outset. When the star appears, and they are summoned by the angel, they follow him on 'drombodaries.' A very drastic scene ensues between the Kings and Herod, who in a speech of the utmost vigour warns them, and expresses his perturbation at the birth of a royal babe. A 'Doctor' expounds prophecy to him, but he declares it false 'by Mahownde full of mighte,' and sends the Kings on their way, with ominous oaths as to his future proceedings. Herod, as is well known, was a typical character of the early mystery-drama; and his raving, of which we here have a sufficient specimen, has become proverbial. *The Offering and Return of the Three Kings* and the *Slaughter of the Innocents* form a necessary sequel. The latter play is infinitely the coarsest of the series; but there is evidence of the sense of effective dramatic construction at its end, where the scene in which Herod is carried away by a demon, after bewailing the torments of his last hours, is succeeded by the tranquil close of the return from Egypt. In *The Purification* and *The Temptation* Scripture is more accurately followed; in the latter, however (with which *The Woman taken in Adultery* is rather ingeniously combined into a single piece), a 'Doctor' expounds the significance of the events represented from 'Gregorye' and from 'Austyne.' The solemn

prologue to the *Lazarus* is spoken by the Saviour himself, after which the healing of the blind man is represented at great length, and followed by the raising of Lazarus, which seems to me to be treated with considerable moderation and real appropriateness of manner.

Christ's Entry into Jerusalem is full of action, containing incidents elsewhere distributed among two or three plays. The sitting at meat in the house of Simon the Leper ('messille' he is here called), the offering of Mary Magdalene, and the discontent of Judas Iscariot, then the expectancy of the citizens and the entry of the Saviour into Jerusalem, with the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple, and the preparation of the arrest in the Sanhedrim, are all crowded into a single pageant. It will be noticed that the discontent of Judas at the permitted waste of the precious ointment is treated as a dramatically sufficient motive for his treason. In *Christ Betrayed*, the action progresses through the Last Supper and the night at Gethsemane to the arrest of the Saviour; the washing of the disciples' feet is introduced, and the dialogue accompanying it is at once simple and touching[1]. The *Passion* and the *Crucifixion* follow. In the former, much vivacity is added by a judicious change of metre, from that used by the 'bushoppes' to that employed by the common Jews who torture and mock the Saviour. The *Harrowing of Hell* is an elaborate treatment of the well-known legend from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus; and introduces the curious fancy that Enoch and Elias inhabited Paradise alone during the interval between their 'vanishing' from earth and the descent of Christ into hell; and that on the coming of Antichrist, as is fully shown in the subsequent play of *Antichrist*, they suffered death as martyrs, and rose again 'in daies three and an halfe.' After the souls of the Just have been saved by the Harrowing, a

[1] Nothing at Oberammergau better illustrated the powerful effect of a faithful and simple following of the Gospel narrative than the incident of the feet-washing. But the grace and dignity displayed in this scene by the representative of Christ was beyond praise, and on the level of really high art.

personage appears as remaining behind in the hands of the devils—a woman who describes herself and her sins at length. She was 'some tyme'

> 'a tavernere
> A gentill gossipe and a tapstere,
> Of wyne and ale a trustie brewer,'

and in the exercise of her profession was guilty of 'marring good maulte.' She impresses the warning of her irrevocable doom upon

> 'All tipling tapsters that are cuninge,
> Mysspendinge moche maulte, brewinge so theyne,
> Selling small cuppes moneye to wyn,
> Againste all truth to deale.
> Therfore this place ordeyned is
> For such ylle doeres so moche amisse;
> Here shall the have ther joye and blesse,
> Exsaulted by the necke,
> With my mayster, mightye Mahownde,
> For castinge moulte besyddes the combe,
> Moche watter takinge for to componde,
> And littill of the secke;
> With all mashers minglers of wyne in the nighte,
> Brewinge so blendinge againste daye lighte,
> Suche newe made clarrytte is cause full righte
> Of sicknes and desease.
> This I betake you, more and lesse,
> To my sweete mayster, Sir Sathanas,
> To dwell with hym in his place,
> When it shall you please;'

—so that a lesson is attached to this solemn play, which in the now remote days in which it was read doubtless came home to the bosoms of many virtuous tradesmen.

In the *Resurrection*, Pilate (oddly using the affirmation 'as I am a trewe Jewe') sets the watch over the Sepulchre; and there is an unusually clever touch of sarcasm in the remark of *Secundus Miles* that

> 'Our prince hath sworne that we shall dye
> Without anye propheseye.'

Indeed this play is very effectively written; and the speech

of the risen Saviour is not without a genuine poetic afflatus[1]. But I must pass over this play and its next successors, the *Pilgrims of Emaus* and the *Ascension*[2], in order to point out the special attention which appears to have been devoted, as was indeed natural in the case of a Whitsuntide performance, to that entitled the *Emission of the Holy Ghost*. Its elaborate and at the same time didactic character (the speech of *Deus* should be especially noted) constitutes it in a manner the central play of this collective mystery. The effect of the miraculous acquisition of the gift of tongues by the Apostles is ingeniously indicated by the appearance of two *alienigenae*, who marvel at their 'jongling' the languages of 'Mesopotamye, Capodorye, and Jurye,' 'the yle of Ponthus and Asye, Friceland and Pamphani, Egipte righte into Billi[3],' and others. The next play, *Ezekiel*, is purely didactic, containing a recital by Ezekiel of several of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and a 'morolizing' upon them by an Expositor. The play of *Antichrist* is exceedingly remarkable. No play besides this exists on the subject, except one in Latin exhibited during the reign of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1152–1190), and pervaded very strikingly by the spirit of Teutonic self-consciousness[4]. The two plays are based on the same legend, but the German has a distinctly national tendency, and its conclusion is very abrupt. The English cannot be said to attempt any application whatever of the legend of Antichrist, whose triumph and slaying of Enoch and Elias are followed by his own overthrow by the sword

[1] 'Eirthlye mon that I have wroughte,
Awake out of thy slepe;
Eirthlye man that I have bought
Of me thou have no kepe,' &c.

[2] In the *Ascension* may be observed a striking instance of the translation of Latin versicles into a free vernacular paraphrase ('Quis est iste qui venit de Edom,' &c.) Such passages serve from time to time to remind the reader even of those later Mysteries of the liturgical origin of the Mystery-drama. See also the *Credo* and its paraphrase in the *Emission of the Holy Ghost*.

[3] The Harleian MS. (see Wright, Note ii. 218) reads 'Pamphily' and 'Lybby,' doubtless rightly. 'Friceland' seems a confusion between Frisia and Phrygia.

[4] It is printed by Wright in the second volume of his *Chester Plays*.

of the Archangel Michael. He then reveals his true character, appealing for help to

> 'Sathanas and Lucifier,
> Bellsabube, bolde Balacher,
> Ragnell, Ragnell, thou arte my deare,
> Nowe fare I wounder evill'—

but he is carried off to hell; Enoch and Elias rise again, and are conducted to heaven by the Archangel. The last play of the series is of course *Doomsday*, the action of which is arranged with tolerable symmetry, a *Papa*, *Imperator*, *Rex* and *Regina salvati* being contrasted in speech with their counterparts, and a *Justiciarius* and *Mercator* to boot, *damnati*. In spite of the free treatment of the Popes, this play breathes a distinctly ecclesiastical spirit; one of the lawyer's sins was 'payering holye churches possession;' one of the merchant's 'never hying to holye churche;' and no trace occurs of the ideas of the Reformation. Significantly enough, this play, and together with it the entire collective mystery, terminates with the appearance of the four Evangelists, who bear witness to the words of Christ which have received their fulfilment, and thus appropriately conclude a series of representations in the main based upon the sacred narrative itself. A living Bible has thus in a sense been unrolled before the people; or, if the expression be preferred, a sermon has been preached of which the whole Scripture narrative is the text[1].

Other miracle-plays.

Besides these collective series we possess isolated plays, which it is unnecessary to examine in detail. Four of these, of which one is a morality, are preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in the Digby MSS.[2] The first, which from the name of its transcriber, 'Jhon Parfre' (the date of the transcript is 1512), is called *Parfre's Candlemas-Day*, and which treats of the Massacre of the Innocents and

Parfre's Candlemas-Day.

[1] It will not be forgotten that if these mysteries can be carried as far back as the close of the thirteenth century, this was a time when sermons had ceased to be generally preached in English churches. See Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, vol. ii. p. 65.

[2] *Ancient Mysteries from the Digby MSS.* Edinburgh, printed for the Abbotsford Club, 1835. (Edited by Mr. Sharp of Coventry.)

the Flight into Egypt, seems from internal evidence to have formed part of a more extended series. Here we once more meet with Herod's pompous and inflated speeches, and with his alliteration. The second, the *Conversion of Saul*, begins and ends with a short address by the poet or author, who refers to the 'byble' for his authority. The first part of the play (which is divided into three parts, each of which was acted at a different station) is not, however, taken from a Scriptural source[1]; for Saul is here introduced as a knight-adventurer, and a comic scene takes place between his servant and the 'hosteler.' The Conversion occupies the second part; in the third, which represents St. Paul's escape from the toils of Caiaphas and Annas, a later insertion has been made of an ingenious description. The Infernals hold a council, in which Belial and his messenger Mercury appear, to avert the dangers apprehended for their cause from the conversion of Saul. The third miracle of this collection is by far the most remarkable, as it is by far the most elaborate. Its subject is *Mary Magdalene*, whose fortunes are pursued through a long series of episodes, which are partly Scriptural, partly legendary, partly introduce allegorical figures (she is besieged in her castle by the Seven Deadly Sins, and one of them tempts her by wine). Not only Tiberius Caesar, but a King of Marseilles appears, and makes a double journey by sea on the stage. The life of the saint is accompanied to its holy close; but the action is so changing and complex as not to admit of any description except a detailed analysis. The play is full of alliteration. The last of these plays is, as already stated, a morality, the chief characters of which are *Mind*, *Will*, and *Understanding*, who are regarded as emanations from the Three Persons of the Trinity, and Lucifer, who enters first with the usual 'Out herrowe[2],'

The Conversion of Saul.

Mary Magdalene,

[1] There seems no connexion between this play and the *Jeux du Martire S. Estienne et de la Convercion de S. Pol*, printed in Fournier, *Le Th. Fr. avant la Renaissance*, p. 2 *seqq.*

[2] 'Ho, ho, ho,' and 'Oute haro out out' are the exclamations by which the Devil is wont to announce himself in the miracles. See Sharp's *Dissertation*, p. 85 *seqq.* In Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* Satan enters with the usual 'Hoh, hoh, hoh,' an evident reminiscence from the old mysteries and moralities, as

and then 'cometh in again as a goodly gallant,' and conducts a sophistical argument of considerable skill.

and others. Mr. Sharp has also printed, with his *Dissertation* referred to above, one of the *Coventry Tradesmen's Pageants* (that of the *Shearmen and Taylors*), which are to be distinguished from the *Coventry Plays* already described. Its subject is the Birth of Christ and Massacre of the Innocents; Isaiah prologises; the rest of the play is of the usual kind, but it may be remarked that there is no ribald jesting among the shepherds. The brief scene between 'Mare' and 'Josoff' before their entry is very touching in its simple naturalness:

> 'A Josoff husebond my chyld waxith cold
> And we haue noo fyre to warme hym wt.'

The 'Nuncius' who introduces Herod performs this courtly office in French, and Herod consults his own dignity by beginning with a line of Latin, but immediately falls into the usual English rodomontade, appealing to 'Mahownd,' and to his own victories over 'Magog and Madroke.'

Some further miracle-plays have been edited by Collier and Wright, which as containing, so far as I am acquainted with them, no element of difference from those already described, may be conveniently passed by. Among them are a *Burial of Christ*, a *Wepinge of the Three Maries*, a *Resurrection*[1]; a *Harrowing of Hell*, from a MS. as old as the reign of Edward III, doubtless the most ancient extant specimen of the English religious drama[2]; a *Sacrifice of Abraham*, discovered at Dublin; a *Marriage of the Virgin*[3]; and an *Incredulity of St. Thomas*[4]. The last-named was the play performed by the Scriveners at York; and its simplicity, as compared with the treatment of the same subject in other plays, is such, in construction, in paucity of characters, and in diction, that its latest editor thinks it probable that the piece existed in the shape in

Whalley points out, though Gifford dictatorially pronounces the reference 'out of place.'

[1] *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. ii.

[2] Collier, ii. 136–7.

[3] Privately printed by Mr. Collier. I have not seen these.

[4] *Camden Soc.* 1859 (vol. iv. of the *Camden Miscellany*). Edited by Mr. Collier.

which it has come down to us at least as early as the reign of Edward III. If so, it stands at one extremity of a body of productions, at the other end of which stand the sacred plays of Bishop Bale, which will be briefly noticed when I come to speak of that author.

Moralities.

In tracing the origin and course of unconscious growths it is well to abstain from any endeavour to draw hard and fast, and therefore more or less arbitrary, lines of demarcation. The origin of the *moralities*, or *moral-plays*, has been much disputed; and in their English developement they have been diversely described as springing from the miracle-plays, and again as wholly unconnected with these. The *moralities* cannot, as it seems to me, be legitimately described as an offspring of the religious drama; but they were nowhere wholly independent of it, and in England they both adopted its external form and cannot have been rigorously distinguished from it in the popular mind.

A *morality* may be defined as a play enforcing a moral truth or lesson by means of the speech and action of characters which are personified abstractions—figures representing virtues and vices, qualities of the human mind, or abstract conceptions in general[1].

Their origin,

Now, in the first instance, it was impossible that the Christian religious drama, whether appearing as an essentially literary growth, or primarily designed as a species of popular entertainment, should refrain from at least occasionally introducing the essential elements of the above kind of production. And this, because the basis of Christian religious teaching—the Bible—so largely employs this very method of enforcing the truths and lessons which it is its object to convey. Both the Old and the New Testament, besides containing entire books which the Church has at all times understood as allegorical in design—such as the *Song of Solomon* and the *Revelation*—are, as primarily addressing themselves to Eastern readers or hearers, full

[1] The ordinary scheme of a morality is accordingly very like that of the game 'wherin vices fyghte with vertues' described in Book II of More's *Utopia*.

of figurative passages introducing personified abstractions. The prophetical character of a great part of the Old Testament depends on an interpretation proceeding on this assumption.

In any attempt to paraphrase or reproduce, whether dramatically or otherwise, portions of the Bible, or of Church traditions connecting themselves with its narrative, it was therefore inevitable that the use of personified abstractions should be introduced. Wisdom (in the *Book of Proverbs*), the Bride and her companions (in the *Song of Solomon*), had already been clothed with personality in the Sacred Text itself. But more than this: it has at all times been impossible for the ordinary human mind to regard unpersonified conceptions emotionally. Neither Athenians nor Romans nor Englishmen, *e.g.*, have at any time been able to think or speak of Athens or Rome or England without either identifying them with personal beings, or unconsciously treating them as such. Thus, too, the early Christians, so soon as the figure of the Founder of their community had ceased to be a personal reminiscence among them, began to regard that community itself as a personal being, under the name of the Church. On this analogy it was possible to people the world of ideas with an endless number of personal forms.

To these germs of the essential method of the *morality* it is unnecessary further to refer. It will be remembered how already in some degree in the plays of Hroswitha, and more decisively in those which succeeded hers, the personification of abstractions found a place. From first to last, the religious drama was therefore open to the introduction of this element; and we have accordingly recognised traces of its presence in every phase of that growth.

In England, the soil was peculiarly favourable for the cultivation of moral allegory in any and every form. I cannot pause to speculate on the causes of the ancient and enduring national predilection for this species of imaginative expression. But it seems probable that, as our literature had more emphatically than that of any other modern nation a religious origin, so it was the Bible itself which

implanted in the English mind its ineradicable love for moral allegory. And it so happened, that in this direction alone the influence of foreign tastes to which the new birth of our literature was exposed co-operated with the pre-existing tendencies with which it necessarily came into contact. The *Vision of Piers Plowman*, an allegory singularly bold in design and wide in scope, was a product of genuinely native origin. But, it was not more than a generation afterwards that Chaucer and Gower, both under the influence of foreign literary tastes, opened the first period of our poetic literature. These tastes were wholly set in the direction of allegory; the *Romaunt of the Rose*, says a great French critic[1], exercised over French poetry, down to the middle of the sixteenth century, the supreme authority of an *Iliad* or a *Divine Comedy*. It is known how the machinery of the *Dream of Scipio* suggested a whole series of Chaucerian poems; and the elaborate allegorical system of the Provençal poets, if it did not give rise to any works which can be with certainty attributed to Chaucer, was productive of English poems which have been not unnaturally ascribed to him[2]. Though Chaucer ultimately passed, partly under Italian influence, partly in obedience to the dictates of his own genius, from the reproduction or invention of allegories to the creation of human types, neither his contemporary Gower nor his successors down into the beginning of the Tudor period similarly emancipated themselves. In Stephen Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure* (*temp.* Henry VII) we have the last work of the old school of allegory in the præ-Elisabethan period of our literature; Barklay's *Ship of Fooles* (translated from Sebastian Brandt) is already occupied with human types rather than personified abstractions; (Skelton's *Bowge of Courte*, though its figures are abstractions, is in spirit of a similar tendency;) and thus corresponds in some degree to the *interludes* which soon afterwards appeared on the stage by the side of the *moralities* proper.

[1] Ste. Beuve, *Tableau di la Poésie Fr. au* 16^me^. *S.*, p. 2.

[2] *The Flower and the Leaf* cannot be accepted as Chaucer's; but the evidence on which it is to be rejected is independent of its character as a poem.

and development

Here we have seen how already at an early date abstract figures properly belonging to moralities were introduced into miracle-plays, or employed to carry on by themselves the action of entire pieces. We noticed the theological moralities, essentially literary works, of Guillaume Herman and Etienne Langton; we found one morality among the Digby MS. mysteries; we observed in the Coventry Plays the occurrence of allegorical figures, such as Justice, Mercy, Peace, and Death. But there is no proof that the moralities asserted themselves in England as an accepted species of stage-entertainment before the second quarter of the fifteenth century, *i.e.* the reign of Henry VI. It may, then, fairly be assumed that it was the general influence of the prevailing literary tastes which about this period established this species of plays by the side of the miracles. But it was quite inevitable that the new species of dramatic entertainment should in form adapt itself to the other species, which was already established in popular favour. In manner of representation there was no essential difference between the performance of a morality and that of a miracle; the pageants used for the one were used for the other; 'vexillators' proclaimed the intended performance, and the performers went from place to place, in both cases[1]. In this sense, therefore, it may be said that the English moralities were an outgrowth of the religious drama. But their essential characteristic they had derived from an independent source. Literary allegory, having received a lasting impulse from French models, produced the dramatic morality. And that this species of dramatic entertainment was, unconsciously at least, treated in England as a foreign growth, seems to admit of negative proof. For it may be broadly stated that the moralities never domesticated themselves among the English people, or acquired any popular influence comparable to that of the miracle-plays, until they had come to connect themselves with political and religious questions which agitated the nation at large[2]. This was in the period of the so-called

[1] Collier, ii. 270, 280.

[2] Cf. Morley, *First Sketch of English Literature*, p. 246.

Reformation of Henry VIII, and of the movements backwards and forwards under his successors; but the fitful and uncertain character of these movements in their earlier phases, and the unwillingness of Henry, Somerset, Mary, and Elisabeth to leave the direction of these movements to the people itself, caused the English moralities as an instrument for the expression of public opinion to lead a troubled and chequered course; and before they had reached a vigorous developement, they were already being superseded by more advanced dramatic species.

in France

If this be borne in mind, we shall not expect to find the history of the English moralities either as interesting or as entertaining as that of the French. In France, as has been already observed, a popular drama of secular origin, and concerning itself mainly with secular topics, had throughout maintained itself by the side of the religious plays, though the two species were frequently mingled. Thus, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the moralities of the *Basoche*, the *sotties* of the *Enfans sans souci*, and the *farces* represented by both brotherhoods, continued to give free vent to popular opinion on political as well as social topics. It is not sufficiently known how the gay and outspoken genius of mediaeval France contrived to temper distress and despotism alike by these vivacious productions. The pressure of the English invasion and the radical despotism of Lewis XI are alike reflected by the contemporary French popular stage; here Lewis XI's system of 'new men' found its critics, and Lewis XII's struggle against the Papacy its supporters. But these French plays, even when called *moralities*, have rather the character of interludes with typical personages (such as the immortal *Maître Pathelin*) than of allegorical moralities, though personified abstractions are frequently, and even Scriptural personages occasionally, introduced into them. They bear a certain resemblance to the Athenian comedy of the second period, the period represented by the *Plutus* of Aristophanes[1].

[1] As Ebert (*Entwicklungsgesch.*, p. 25) says, the French moralities were *developed*, not *invented*, in this period. For examples see the collections of Viollet le Duc and Fournier, already cited. Cf. also an excellent sketch of the

and England.

In the English moralities it is not easy to draw a distinction between particular groups; such signs of advance as they show would best be gathered from an attempt to survey them chronologically. I can, however, only briefly describe those which have been accessible to me; and refer for a fuller and more detailed account to the analyses given by Mr. Collier[1]. In general, it may be pointed out that the name of *Interludes* is from a very early date applied to these plays. This name, which seems to have arisen from the fact that these plays were occasionally performed in the intervals of banquets and entertainments[2], is usually in literary history restricted to a special dramatic form, which will be noticed hereafter.

The Devil and the Vice.

One common characteristic of these moralities is the constant introduction into them of the characters of the *Devil* and the *Vice*. The Devil was of course taken over from the miracle-plays, in which, as we have abundantly seen, he played a prominent part. In the morals he occasionally appeared alone, but he was more usually accompanied by the Vice, who, on the other hand, now and then appeared without the Devil[3]. As there is in the old French moralities no character similar to the *Vice*, he must be assumed to have been of native English origin. Ingenious etymologies have been suggested for his name; but there seems no reason to reject the most obvious interpretation. For he has many aliases, such as *Shift*, *Ambidexter*, *Sin*, *Fraud*, *Iniquity*, &c., which are but variations of his ordinary appellation[4]. Inasmuch as he was generally

famous Pierre Gringore, the Mère Sotte of his famous company, in L. Moland's *Origines, &c.*, p. 345 *seqq*. The sprightliness of diction in these French plays makes them delightful reading. Molière's indebtedness to them is well known.

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 279-383.

[2] Collier, ii. 271. In France, where they were occasionally acted in the intervals of the mysteries, they were sometimes called Pauses. Fournier, *Introd.* p. vi.

[3] Collier, ii. 262-5. See the amusing passage in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News* (act i. sc. ii.): 'My husband, Timothy Tattle, God rest his poor soul! was wont to say, there was no play without a fool and a devil in't; he was for the devil still, God bless him! The devil for his money, would he say, I would fain see the devil.'

[4] Douce, *Illustrations from Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 469. Cf. Pug's enumeration

dressed in a fool's habit, it assuredly was the familiar custom of keeping an attendant fool which first suggested the invention of this character. The notion seems to have been as a rule to attach him to the Devil as an attendant, but of a peculiar kind, his duty being above all to teaze and torment the Fiend for the edification and amusement of the audience. He was gradually blended with the domestic fool, who survived in the regular drama; and at the end of the sixteenth century fell out of fashion as a distinct personage [1].

It is impossible not to admire the ingenuity of this invention, which counterbalanced the dead weight of the abstractions constituting the main agents of the morality. It was the character of the Vice which helped to make possible the growth of comedy out of the moralities.

Passing by a small number of religious plays which display a mixture of miracle and morality, and belong in date to the beginning of the reign of Elisabeth [2], we note in the first instance a series of moral plays belonging to the reign of Henry VI, which still remain in MS. and of which I can therefore give no account at first hand. The first of these is *The Castle of Perseverance* [3]. The subject of this play is the warfare carried on against *Humanum Genus* and his companions, the Seven Cardinal Virtues, by the Seven Deadly Sins and their commanders, *Mundus*, *Belial*, and *Caro*. He is besieged by them in the *Castle of Perseverance*, where *Confessio* has bidden him take up his abode; and in his old age he finally gives way to the persuasions of *Avaritia*. His soul is finally arraigned by *Pater sedens in judicio*, and apparently saved at the last.

The Castle of Perseverance.

of names of the Vice and Iniquity's description of his duties, in *The Devil is an Ass*, act i. sc. i. See also *Staple of News*, act ii. sc. i., and the well-known passage in *Twelfth Night*.

[1] Douce, *Illustrations from Shakspeare*, vol. ii. pp. 304–5.

[2] Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* (printed 1567), in which the Vice appears under the name of *Infidelity*; *King Darius* (printed 1565), in which he is called *Iniquity*; *Jacob and Esau* (printed 1568, entered on the books of the Stationers' Company 1557); and *Godly Queene Hester* (printed 1561), where the Vice is personified as a jester called Hardy-Dardy. These plays are described by Collier, ii. 241–257.

[3] *Ib.* 279–287.

This action (which includes a large number of additional personified abstractions) is a type of the general contents of these moralities, as exhibiting the conflict between the good and evil powers for the soul of man. The circumstance that the Castle of Perseverance is described as 'strenger thanne any in Fraunce' may seem to point to a French original of this moral play; and the conjecture is borne out by the fact that a French morality of the year 1506 exists which in a less elaborate way treats the same subject and introduces some of the same characters[1].

Mankind.

Mind, Will, and Understanding has already been mentioned as among the Digby MSS.[2] *Mankind* (to adopt Mr. Collier's designation of another of these plays) is of a similar scope; the part of the Vice is here played by a personage called 'Myscheff;' and the fiend Tutivillus, with whose name we are already acquainted, is introduced as the chief enemy of man. He represents the sin of the flesh[3].

These are the earliest of our extant English moralities; the next series, which are printed, belong to the Tudor reigns.

Nature.

Nature, by Henry Medwall, chaplain to the famous Cardinal Morton, (the enemy, and as some think the biographer, of Richard III,) was produced in the reign of Henry VII. Its subject is, like that of the moralities already noticed, the conflict between good and evil in the mind of man; but there is one stroke of satire, remarkable in a play written by an ecclesiastic, against the Church[4]. In *The World and the Child* (printed 1522, written before the end of the reign of Henry VII, and probably at a very early date[5]) the action is simple, but effective. Man is repre-

The World and the Child.

[1] The *Moralité de Mundus, Caro, Demonia en laquelle verrez les durs assautz et tentations qu'ilz font au chevalier chrestien et comme par conseil de son bon esprit avec la grace de Dieu les vaincra et à la fin aura le Paradis;* printed in Fournier, *u. s.* p. 200 *seqq.*—The machinery of the siege of a castle is of course familiar to English allegorical literature, both dramatic and non-dramatic. Its curious introduction into the Digby MS. miracle-play of *Mary Magdalene* has been noted above.

[2] Ante, p. 53.

[3] Collier, ii. 293–297.

[4] *Ib.* 298–306.

[5] Collier (p. 306) has directed attention to the alliteration in the speeches

sented in the several stages of his life; first he appears as *Infans*, and then receives from *Mundus* the name of *Wanton*. He describes the 'quaynte games' of childhood, as reckoned from the age of seven to that of fourteen years; and then becomes for seven years more *Lust and Lykynge*, the representative of adolescence. *Mundus* once more re-christens him as *Manhode*, and commends to him the service of seven kings, *i.e.* the seven deadly sins. Hereupon *Conscyence* appears, 'a techer of the spyrytualete' ('spyrytualete! what the deuyll may that be?' is *Manhode's* irreverent enquiry), and in a long dialogue converts *Manhode*. But he is led astray by *Folye*, whose 'chefe dwellynge' is in London and who was 'broughte forthe in holborne.' *Conscyence* calls to his aid *Perseueraunce*, who meets man now in *Age*, and bearing the name (which he owes to *Folye*) of *Shame*. *Perseueraunce* preaches 'contrycyon,' and teaches *Age*, whom he has re-named *Repentaunce*, the creed of Christianity, with the acceptance of which by the hero the morality closes.

Hycke-Scorner.

In *Hycke-Scorner*[1] (printed probably a few years after the above) there is a considerable amount of comic dialogue, with abundance of allusions to the favourite follies and vices of the time. The chief representative of a virtuous protest against the iniquity of the age is *Pity*, those of iniquity *Free-will* and *Imagination*. The latter and his companion Hycke-Scorner finally put *Pity* into the stocks, where (the situation reminds us of Kent's in *King Lear*) he delivers a long diatribe, with a species of lyric refrain, on the sins of the age. *Free-will* and *Imagination* are in the end converted by *Perseverance* and *Contemplation*, certainly without any very great effort. The personage who gives his name to the play only acts a secondary part in it; he is a travelled libertine whom *Free-will* and *Imagination* call

of Mundus, which are quite in the style of the Herod of the miracle-plays. The historical allusion to 'kynge robert of cysell' (Robert of Naples, who died in 1343) belongs indeed to the fourteenth century, but romance had kept his memory alive. (A play called *Robert Cicil* was acted at Chester in 1656; Collier, i. 113.) The play is printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. xii.

[1] Printed in Hawkins' *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. i.

in to join their congenial society, and who, after enumerating his voyages all over the world and 'in the londe of Rumbelowe, thre myl out of hell,' favours the audience with a variety of personal reminiscences not requiring to be further characterised. Upon the whole, this morality must have been rather entertaining than effective; and differs greatly from that to be next noticed.

Every-man.

The morality of *Every-man*[1] was printed before 1531; its intention therefore can hardly have been controversial, and indeed, while most emphatically orthodox, it cannot be said to refer, unless implicitly, to the doubts which were arising in connexion with the dogmas which it enforces. Though it contains passages which point to an ecclesiastical authorship, though it glorifies the power and authority of the priesthood at the expense of emperors and kings and the angels in heaven themselves, and though the view of salvation on which it turns is one directly opposed to the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, its primary object is ethical rather than theological. The plot is simple, but effective. *Every-man*, as the representative of mankind at large[2], is summoned before the divine tribunal to give an account of his life, and (as the Messenger who acts as a Prologue, and the 'Doctour' who moralises at the end, both explain) he is forsaken by *Felowship*, *Jolyte*, *Strengthe*, *Pleasure* and *Beaute*, as well as in the end by *Fyve-Wyttes*[3] and *Dyscrecyon:* his *Good-Dedes* alone are true to him; *Good-Dedes* and her sister *Knowlege* introduce him to *Confessyon*, who imposes upon him penance (which he duly performs on the stage) and clothes him in the garment of contrition. By the advocacy of *Good-Dedes* he is saved, and his soul is received in heaven. The sustained solemn tone of this morality is very striking; and the action is so progressive in its interest that Bishop Percy rightly ascribes a tragic character to this remarkable work.

[1] Printed in Hawkins' *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. i.

[2] Like *Chascun* in the curious French farce of *Tout, Rien, et Chascun* in Fournier's collection, p. 329 *seqq.*

[3] The Five Wits correspond to the *Cinq Sens de l'Homme* in the coarse French farce of that name, in *Ancien Th. Fr.* vol. iii.

R. Wever's Lusty Juventus (1550 *circ.*).

If *Every-man* is the production of Catholic piety, the teachings of the Reformation are reflected with the utmost distinctness in *Lusty Juventus*[1]. This morality[2] was written in the reign of Edward VI, and breathes the spirit of the dogmatic reformation of the Protector Somerset. Nothing is known of its author except the name—R. Wever. Yet in spite of its abundant theology, including an exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith, it is neither ill written, nor ill constructed. *Lusty Juventus* is the representative of that younger generation to which the author hopefully looks, for he makes the Devil say,

'Oh, oh, ful well I know the cause
That my estimacion doth thus decay;
The olde people would beleve stil in my lawes,
But the younger sort lead them a contrary way;
They wyll not beleve, they playnly say,
In old traditions and made by men,
But they wyll lyve as the scripture teacheth them.'

Thus *Lusty Juventus*, who opens the play with a pretty lyric to the refrain, 'In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure,' is speedily converted by the teachings and preachings of *Good Councel;* and to bring him back from these the Devil has to call in *Hipocrisye* to his aid. *Hipocrisye* encourages the faltering fiend by a long and vigorous speech, in which he praises his stock-in-trade of

'Holy fyre, holy palme,
Holy oyle, holy creame,
And holy ashes also;
Holy bronches, holy rynges,
Holy knelinge, holy sensynges,
And a hundred trim trams mo;'—

and succeeds in leading *Juventus* astray with the aid of a frail female called *Abhominable Living*. The lyric which the tempters sing is very pleasing, especially the stanza,—

'Do not the flowers sprynge freshe and gaye,
Plesaunt and swete in the month of Maye?

[1] Printed in the new edition of Dodsley, vol. i, and in Hawkins, vol. i. Ben Jonson refers to this morality in *The Devil is an Ass*, act i. sc. 1.

[2] See the concluding lines, where a prayer is offered for the king and those of the nobility

'whom his grace hath authorised
To maynteyne the publike wealthe over us and them.'

And when their time cometh, they fayde awaye.
Report me to you, reporte me to you.'

The hero is, however, finally recovered by *Good Councel*, the exhortations of the latter being supported by a personage who is called *God's Mercyfull Promises*[1], and discourses in accordance with his name.

Interlude of Youth (1555 *circ.*).

The *Interlude of Youth*[2], though resembling *Lusty Juventus* in subject as well as in title, is less elaborate, and manifestly the work of a Catholic author[3]. The contention for the guidance of Youth here lies between *Charity* and *Humility* on the one hand, and *Pride*, *Riot*, and *Lechery* on the other. There is little or nothing of a controversial tone in this piece; and altogether this morality may be said to be distinguished by unusual gracefulness and ease of manner. It was doubtless composed in Queen Mary's reign.

Besides these moralities of a religious tendency, may be noticed two others—probably belonging to the early part of the Reformation period—which remind us of the wideness and variety of the range of ideas opened to the literary mind by the Renascence movement. The interlude of

Rastell's (?) Nature of the Four Elements (1517–9).

The Nature of the Four Elements[4] (printed in 1519 by Rastell, and possibly written by him; the date of its composition, if a passage referring to the discovery of 'newe londs' as having occurred 'within this xx yere' is to be taken quite literally, may be ascribed to the year 1517[5]) is a genuine *curiosum*. The lesson which it is designed to teach is the advantage of the pursuit of science, which is urged upon *Humanity* by *Natura Naturata*, *Studious Desire*, and his friend *Experience*, while he is tempted astray by *Sensual Appetite*, a Taverner, and *Ignorance* (with a song[6]). First *Humanity* goes through a course of astro-

[1] See below as to Bale's play bearing a similar name.

[2] Printed in vol. ii. of Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley.

[3] See, besides *Charity's* opening speech, the allusions to the Virgin, and *Humility's* gift of a rosary to *Youth*.

[4] Printed in vol. i. of Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley.

[5] 'Americus,' to whom the author ascribes the discovery, sailed from Cadiz in 1497 (cf. Collier, ii. 321, *note*).

[6] Consisting of a number of quotations from popular ditties. Ignorance is

nomy, and after an interval of relaxation resumes his studies on the subject of the rotundity of the earth under the guidance of *Experience*, a travelled cosmographer. But *Ignorance* intervenes with his medley; and in the end (which is imperfect) *Nature* is left giving counsel to *Humanity* to continue his studies, although he may now and then 'for his comfort' have to satisfy his sensual appetite. Thus the close of this well-meant endeavour seems to have been as flat as its exordium is sobering [1].

Redford's Wyt and Science (*temp.* Hen. VIII, later part).

John Redford's morality of *Wyt and Science* [2] was likewise composed in the reign of Henry VIII, but in its later part. The tendency of this morality resembles that of the preceding; the principal characters are *Wit*, *Science*, and '*father Reson*,' without whom *Wit* is impotent, and, on the other side, *Idlenes*, *Ignorance*, and *Tediousnes*. There is an amusing scene, in which *Ignorance* is put through a spelling-lesson by *Idlenes*, the word which he is set to spell being *Ingland*. The density of *Ignorance*, and his rustic speech, are extremely diverting [3].

John Skelton (b. 1460 *circ.*).

To the reign of Henry VIII also belongs the solitary extant dramatic work of a writer who, notwithstanding the admirable edition of his works which we possess [4], has hardly as yet received the degree of attention to which

an upholder of plain-song *versus* prick-song (melody *versus* counterpoint); and observes that it is

'as good to say plainly
Give me a spade,
As give me a spa, ve, va, ve, va, ve, vade.'

[1] We have to deplore the loss of eight pages in the middle of this morality (in the course of Experience's scientific demonstration); but the author—or printer—expressly observes that when the piece is played 'ye may leave out much of the sad matter,' without spoiling the consistency of the construction. He clearly (see also the close of the Messenger's prologue) did not feel quite sure of his public, and took care, like other preachers of popular science after him, to put a little alloy into his silver. The excellence of his intentions disarms criticism.

[2] Edited by Halliwell for the *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1848.

[3] The costume of Ignorance, who is 'deckt lyke a very asse,' resembles that of *Anerie* in the French farce *Science et Anerie*. See Fournier, p. 334; but I do not know what authority there is for the details of the admirable illustrations to this volume.

[4] *The Poetical Works of John Skelton: with notes and some account of the author and his writings*, by the Rev. Alexander Dyce. 2 vols. 1843.

his merits entitle him. Skelton, as was inevitable in such a career as his, brought down upon himself the ill-will of literary as well as political contemporaries; he was sneered at by Barklay, and persecuted by Wolsey. But his reputation has suffered from the defective sympathy of Warton, the orthodox indignation of Johnson, and the epigrammatic unfairness of Pope. Skelton is coarse; but it cannot be said of him that he panders to vice or prostitutes himself to the service of immorality. The ends of his satire were in the main moral; and its tendency was in full sympathy with the great movement of his age. His rhyme, as he says himself, 'hath in it some pith;' and there is *life* in his 'tumbling' verse. His political note is that hatred of ecclesiastical domination which was one of the motive forces of the Reformation; his literary note is that return to natural sense and vivacity which was one of the mainsprings of the Renascence[1].

Skelton's Magnyfycence (after 1515).

Skelton's 'goodly interlude and mery' of *Magnyfycence* was certainly written after the year 1515[2]. In construction and purpose it has nothing to distinguish it from earlier moralities. Its object is, as one of the characters states at the close, to offer

> 'A playne example of worldly vaynglory,
> Howe in this world there is no sekernesse,
> But fallyble flatery enmyxyd with bytternesse.'

Magnyfycence, the hero of the allegory, is seduced by a company of false friends, among whom are *Counterfeit-countenance*, *Crafty-conveyance*, *Cloked-collusion*, and *Courtly-abusion*, into a life without measure, such a life as the introduction to the main action has, on the authority of 'Oracius,' stigmatised as leading to ruin. He accordingly

[1] Ben Jonson, who seems to have been thoroughly familiar with Skelton's works, introduces him in person into his Antimask of *The Fortunate Isles*. He had already appeared as presenter, manager, and actor in Munday's *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, where the Skeltonical verse is imitated (cf. *infra*, p. 235).—In later times, justice was already done to Skelton by the author of the *Curiosities of Literature*. The excellent Miss Strickland finds in the early intimacy between Henry (VIII) and Skelton the probable foundation of the grossest crimes of the royal pupil.

[2] This appears from an allusion to a dead 'Kynge Lewes of Fraunce' as famed for largesse, who must be Lewis XII.

becomes associated with *Adversity* and *Poverty*, and then with *Despair* and *Mischief*, the latter of whom advises him to commit suicide; but he is recovered by *Good-hope*, and with the aid of *Redress*, *Circumspection*, and *Perseverance*, brought to recognise the error of his ways, and to follow above all the exhortation, 'to knowe him selfe mortall, for all his dygnyte,' 'not to set all his affyance in Fortune full of gyle;' and to 'remember this lyfe lastyth but a whyle.' The teaching of this morality was singularly appropriate to the extravagant and arrogant age to which it was addressed; but contrary to his practice in his Satires, Skelton abstains from any personal applications. The merit of the play consists in the vigour and vivacity of its diction. The author gives free utterance to the wealth of his vocabulary; the rhymes are, as in his Satires, frequently happy and ingenious, and he freely permits himself to lapse into the short irregular lines which he loved. Upon the whole, the dignity of the morality is well sustained, but there are occasional passages of a lighter character, and a lyric song by *Lyberte* is introduced, further to relieve the monotony of the piece. In one speech (that in which *Magnyfycence* exults at the height of his prosperity) we are reminded by the general manner and by the alliteration of the tirades of the Herods and Pilates in the Mysteries.

Other dramatic works by Skelton.

Besides this morality, Skelton, as he tells us in his *Garlande of Laurell*, produced 'of *Vertu* the souerayne enterlude,' and a 'commedy, *Achademios* callyd by name.' Both are lost; and the loss of the latter is perhaps to be especially regretted, as it probably contained satirical remarks on the education of the age, resembling those which Skelton introduces in his odd satire of *Speke, Parrot*[1]. A fourth play by the same author, *Nigromansir* (*i. e.* Necromancer), now also lost, had been seen by Warton. From his account[2], it seems to have been an attack, in a dramatic form, on some abuses in the Church, 'yet not

[1] Skelton, who 'lernyd to spelle' Henry VIII himself, and whom Erasmus described as 'unum Britannicarum literarum lumen ac decus,' was laureate of both the English Universities, as well as of Louvain.

[2] *History of English Poetry*, sec. xxxiii. *Il Negromante* is the title of a comedy by Ariosto.

without a due regard to decency, and an apparent respect for the dignity of the audience.' The story or plot, Warton further informs us, is the trial of *Simony* and *Avarice;* the Devil is the judge, and to his realm the convicted culprits are consigned.

It would not have suited the temper of any of the Tudor princes to allow so direct a dramatic lesson to be read to their lieges, as that which a contemporary Scottish poet was allowed to put into dramatic form for the public eye and ear[1]. In the other English moralities preserved from

[1] Sir David Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Three Estaitis* (for which see Chalmers' edition of Lyndsay's *Poetical Works* (1806), vols. i. and ii.) is written in the dialect known as Lowland Scotch, which is of course nothing but an English dialect. Lyndsay himself regarded his dialect as English. See the passage in *Part ii*, where he adds to a quotation from St. Paul, '*Qui non laborat non manducet*,' the explanation:

'This is, in Inglische toung, or leit:
QUHA LABOURIS NOCHT HE SALL NOT EIT.'

(The same Scriptural quotation is made in the French *Moralité Nouvelle des Enfans de Maintenant; Anc. Th. Fr.* iii. 14.) The early history of the drama in Scotland is not in general of sufficient importance to merit much attention; it extends apparently over little more than a century; for the first mystery of which we have any information, called *The Haliblude*, was acted at Aberdeen in 1445, and the Scottish Reformation put an end to such beginnings as existed of the Scottish drama. It is all the more interesting to observe that Lyndsay's morality, which in vigour and variety far exceeds any English effort of the same species, was distinctly designed to promote and encourage the Reformation. It was acted at Cupar in 1535, and afterwards reproduced more than once; an eyewitness, who saw it acted at Edinburgh in 1554 before the Queen Regent, informs us that it lasted on that occasion 'for nyne houris afoir none till sex houris at evin.'

Lyndsay was the faithful servant and intimate counsellor of his sovereign, James V, whom he had carefully tended as a child, and whom his sympathy and advice consistently supported as a man. This intimacy accounts for the extraordinary outspokenness which the author of this morality permitted himself. It addresses itself with the utmost candour to exposing the existing abuses in the State, and more particularly in the Church. The length of this morality is such that I cannot attempt an analysis. (Mr. H. Morley has given one in his *First Sketch of English Literature*, pp. 271–276.) It is divided into two parts, of which 'the best pairt,' as the author says, or at all events the more explicit, is the second. The earlier part resembles many of the English moralities, though it is written with greater spirit and force than any of these with which I am acquainted. *King Humanitie*, the hero of the action, is seduced by *Sensualite* and her helpmates. *Gude-Counsall* and his companions are resisted by *Dissait*, *Flattrie*, and *Falset*, who appear as the Vices, and who assume disguises (*Flattery* that of a friar). They put *Verity* in the stocks, after exclaiming against the New Testament 'in English toung' which she holds in

the Tudor reigns the predominant purpose remains moral teaching. Thus *The Triall of Treasure* (first printed, apparently in two editions, in 1567[1]) furnishes no evidence as to whether it was written by a Catholic or a Protestant. It is however interesting in more than one respect. Its most distinctive feature is the learning of its author, who displays

The Triall of Treasure (pr. 1567).

her hands; but *Divine Correction* at last brings the king to a better mind, and *Sensuality* takes her departure to the lords of the Spirituality, who have previously refused to have anything to do with *Chastity*.

Already in the first part, some characters of a popular kind are introduced, whose fooling is carried on with the utmost licence (Lyndsay's muse is at times very unmannerly). The second part commences with the complaints of *Pauper*, who is seeking a remedy by law against the exactions imposed upon him by clerical hands, for he is, as *Diligence* informs him,

> 'The daftest fuill, that ever I saw;
> Trows thou, man, be the law to get remeid
> Of men of kirk? Na, nocht till thou be deid.'

So he lies down in despair; and a Pardoner appears, by name 'schir Robert Rome-raker,' who gives

> 'To the devill, with good intent,
> This unsell wickit New-testament
> With thame that it translaitit;'

prays 'to the rude,' that

> 'Martin Luther, that fals loun,
> Black Bullinger, and Melanchthoun
> Had been smorde in their cude;'

and cries his own 'geir,' administering a penance to a 'sowtar' (shoemaker) and his wife, and selling a thousand years' pardon to *Pauper* for his last groat. But *Pauper* repents him of his bargain, and a free-fight ensues, in which the relics are thrown into the water.

After this horse-play the more serious part of the morality commences. The Three Estates appear before the king; and the representative of the suffering people, *Johne the Common-weill*, comes forward with his complaints. The result is that the Vices are put in the stocks, and *Good-Counsel* is called in as adviser. A long debate ensues, witnesses are examined, and summary measures of punishment adopted against the adversaries of social and religious reform. Not less than two sermons are preached, one by the *Doctour* and another by *Folly;* but previously to the latter, Acts have been passed and proclaimed comprehending the necessary changes in the state of the commonwealth. Undoubtedly, the great length of the second division of this morality renders it, as *Diligence* avows in his short epilogue, 'sum part, tedious;' but the distinctness and earnestness of its serious passages are its most striking characteristics, the fun and grossness of the comic passages having evidently been introduced as a foil. Altogether, this dramatic satire is one of the most noteworthy of Lyndsay's works, and by far the most elaborate and powerful of all the mediaeval moralities.

[1] Edited for the Percy Society (*Publications*, vol. xxviii) by Mr. J. O. Halliwell (1850), and printed in Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley, vol. iii.

an equal familiarity with biblical and with classical lore. The prologue illustrates the doctrine of the vanity of human self-indulgence from the philosophy of Diogenes and the Epistle of St. James. Classical allusions and quotations are frequent, and we are evidently here confronted by a genuine scholar of the Renascence. But he is also fond of lyrical efforts, which abound in the piece, and are chiefly, though not uniformly, of a merry description. The *Triall of Treasure* signifies the testing by experience of the vanity of confiding in earthly prosperity; the hero of the morality, *Luste*, being misled by evil counsellors, *Inclination* the Vice among the number (upon whom a bridle is literally placed by *Sapience* and *Juste*), gives himself up to the love of *Treasure*, and the friendship of *Pleasure*, but *God's Visitation* comes upon him, and finally *Time* reduces him and his paramour to naught [1].

Ulpian Fulwel's Like wil to Like, &c. (pr. 1568).

Ulpian Fulwel's *Like wil to Like quod the Devel to the Collier* [2] (printed in 1568) exhibits with a very robust realism the pernicious results of riotous living. The Collier, who is introduced to the tune of 'Tom Collier of Croydon,' plays merely an incidental part in the piece, emblematical of the irresistible force of natural affinities [3]. As he is attracted by the Devil, so Nichol Newfangle, the Vice of the play, who was 'bound prentice before his nativity to Lucifer himself,' draws into his company a congenial crew, consisting of Ralph Roister (the name will be noted), Tom Tosspot, Hankin Hangman, and so forth. After an abundance of boisterous fun [4] ensue moralisings by *Virtuous Living*,

[1] It may be noted that *Greedy-Gutte*, one of the companions of *Luste* in this morality, uses the rustic dialect which reappears in so many of our old plays, and is employed by both Peele and Shakspere.

[2] Printed in Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley, vol. iii.

[3] 'Tom Collier of Croydon hath sold his coals,
And made his market today;
And now he danceth with the Devil,
For like will to like alway.'

The character of Grim, the Collier of Croydon, appears in Edwards' *Damon and Pithias*, and gives its name to another old play noticed below. According to Ritson, quoted by Collier, Crowley's epigram on the *Collier of Croydon* was printed in 1550 or 1551.

[4] Hangman's drunkenness manifests itself in an original Leonine hexameter, and in his dancing 'as evil-favoured as may be devised.'

Good Fame, *God's Promise*, and *Honour*, and the punishment of the offenders by *Severity* as judge. Hangman leads off Cuthbert Cutpurse and Pierce Pickpurse; and Nichol Newfangle rides off for 'a journey to Spain' on his master's back.

The Marriage of Witte and Science (*lic.* 1569–70).

The Marriage of Witte and Science[1] (licensed 1569–70), though its plot and chief characters are borrowed from Redford's earlier morality already noted, deserves attention as in execution altogether one of the most perfect specimens of its class. The excellence of the diction and versification of *Nature's* opening speech prepare the reader for a production of well-sustained literary merit; and no better example could be given of a well-constructed and well-executed morality than this piece, which is regularly divided into acts and scenes. Of the lesson which it enforces I will venture to say that it is thoroughly sound and sensible; and there is a genuine enthusiasm about the tone of the work which deserves the sympathy of every real student.

The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom (*temp.* Elisabeth).

The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom[2] seems likewise to belong to the Elisabethan moralities. It is divided into acts and scenes, and is decidedly one of the liveliest productions of its class. There is considerable reality about several of the personages, among whom are *Snatch* and *Catch*, two vagabond 'soldiares' who have 'come from Flushing to the English port'—characters well known to the comic drama of the Elisabethan age. *Idleness*, who on one occasion appears as a priest, is the Vice, who introduces himself as 'the flower of the frying-pan,' and describes his parentage and antecedents with genuine nonsensical fun:—

> 'My mother had ij. whelps at one litter,
> Both borne in Lent;
> So we ware both put into a musselbote,
> And came sailing in a sowes yeare ouer sea into Kent.'

An element of religious controversy seems likewise to be

[1] Printed in vol. ii. of Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley.

[2] Edited by Halliwell for the *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.* (1846). *Lusty Juventus* is adapted under the name of the above, and thus introduced as a play within a play into the tragedy of *Sir Thomas More* (*vide infra*).

W. Wager's The longer thou livest, &c. (*temp.* Elisabeth).

introduced into W. Wager's *The longer thou livest the more Foole thou art*[1]; but it forms the substance of two moralities of the Elisabethan age which, from this point of view, seem to call for special notice.

New Custome (pr. 1573).

The anonymous piece of *New Custome*[2], printed in 1573, is a purely controversial production; its characters, which are so arranged as to admit of being performed by four players, respectively represent the Church of Rome and its allies, and the Reformation and its supporters. The former are '*Perverse Doctrine*, an old Popish priest,' and '*Ignorance*, another, but elder;' whose friends are '*Hypocrisie*, an olde woman,' and *Creweltie* and *Avarice*, two Rufflers' (*i.e.* bullies); the latter are *New Custome* and *Light of the Gospell*, who are called 'Ministers,' '*Edification*, a Sage,' '*Assuraunce*, a Virtue,' and '*Goddes Felicitie*, a Sage.' The controversy between these opponents is carried on with great ardour; *Perverse Doctrine* regards the spread of the Bible among the people as 'casting perles to an hogge;' *New Custome* quotes 'Paule to the Corinthians,' declares the Mass, Popery, purgatory, and pardons to be 'flatt against Godde's woorde,' and vindicates to himself his proper name of *Primitive Constitution*. *Light of the Gospell* cheers him in his course, while *Hypocrisie* advises *Perverse Doctrine*, who declares that

> 'since these Genevian doctours came so fast into this lande,
> Since that time it was never merie with Englande.'

Creweltie and *Avarice* then appear, and the latter, to vindicate his power against the bluster of his companion, relates a cheering precedent of the foul betrayal of a brother from 'the daies of queene Marie;' but ultimately *Perverse Doctrine* is converted by *Light of the Gospell*, and *Edification*, *Assuraunce*, and *Godde's Felicitie* consummate the triumph of the righteous cause. The morality ends with a prayer for Queen Elisabeth, and a song, the latter not preserved.

In connexion with this work may be mentioned another, which is additionally curious as containing a character taken

[1] This morality, which I have not seen, is described by Collier, ii. 332–338; its hero is *Moros;* and it contains the 'foote' or refrain of several old songs.

[2] Printed in vol. iii. of Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley.

from actual history, though the whole contrivance of the piece allows us still to class it among the moralities. The incident which suggested Nathaniel Woodes' *The Conflict of Conscience* (originally printed in 1581 [1]), *viz.* the abandonment of the Protestant for the Catholic faith by an Italian lawyer of the name of Francis Spira or Spiera, had indeed taken place about the middle of the century; but unless the play was kept concealed by the author for some time after its composition, it can hardly have been written before Protestantism had been definitively re-established in England. The author, who is stated to have been a clergyman of Norwich, seems to bear the Marian persecution in fresh remembrance, and perhaps the Cardinal Legate whose proceedings he holds up to abhorrence may be intended for Reginald Pole, Rome's emissary for the work of reunion [2]. But the play is devoid of any allusions which can be directly brought home to the national history. Its hero Philologus is represented as a learned man who, by the agency of allegorical personages, of whom *Hypocrisy* is the most prominent and *Sensual Suggestion* the most effective, is deluded away from the truth of the Gospel into the toils of Rome. *Conscience* in vain seeks to hold him back; and *Horror* visits him with the pangs—described with some degree of power—of remorse and despair. In the end, the credit of the good cause is saved by a short sixth act or epilogue, in which a Nuntius describes Philologus as having been reconverted at the last, and died in peace with God.

N. Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience (pr. 1581).

The tone of this work is bitterly controversial; and the fulness with which it enters into its subject, as well as the lengthiness of its speeches, are those of a clerical author. Nearly the whole of it is written in the seven-line stanza; and it can hardly have been intended for representation. The blind intolerance which it exhibits almost surpasses

[1] Reprinted from the edition published for the Roxburghe Club in 1851 by Mr. Collier in vol. vi. of Mr. Hazlitt's Dodsley, with Mr. Collier's Introduction to this and the other plays included in his volume.

[2] See iii. 3. It is strange, by the bye, that the priest Caconos who rejoices over the restoration of the Pope's authority and the revival of saints' days, 'pilgrimage, reliques, trentals, and pardons' (iii. 4), should be made to talk what seems intended for Scotch.

that of any other production not professedly theological with which I am acquainted.

Albyon Knight (1557).

The solitary political morality which has come down to us has unfortunately only been preserved in a fragment. *The Sackful of News* (prohibited in 1557 by order of the Privy Council) must have been a play of a different description, and of a less ambitious, if of a more offensive, character. But the 'mery Playe bothe pythy and pleasaunt of *Albyon Knight*' may be described as a morality, inasmuch as all its characters appear to be representatives of either political ideas or political institutions, after the fashion of Lyndsay's *Three Estates*. The hero is of course a personification of England, as John Commonweal is of Scotland in the other play. From the fragment which is all that remains of the play[1], its object would appear to have been to remove the ill-feeling on the part of the commonalty against the nobility, as well as the jealousy between the lords spiritual and the lords temporal. It would be unsafe to speculate on the relations upon which this play turned; nor are we justified in assuming this to have been the play the performance of which was abruptly stopped at Court in 1559; but *Albyon Knight* was certainly written before 1565–6, when it was entered on the register of the Stationers' Company. It will be remembered that this was a period of great uncertainty in the policy of Queen Elisabeth, when intrigues and counter-intrigues were at their height among the great nobles, particularly in connexion with the aspirations of Leicester, and when the great Catholic houses could not yet have reconciled themselves to the newly-made bishops of the existing reign. There is considerable boldness in the implied admonition to *Principalytie*—in other words to the Queen—not to suppose the people unwilling to grant supplies. But in general the references are not special enough to admit of being traced to any particular occasion; and it is improbable that such allusions were intended. The main characters of the morality seem, besides *Albyon Knight*, *Injuri* (who at first appears

[1] Printed by Mr. Collier in vol. i. of the *Shakesp. Soc. Papers*, p. 55 *seqq.* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.* 1844).

under the false name of *Manhode*) and *Justice;* and their contention reminds us of that between the δίκαιος and the ἄδικος λόγος in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes. The chief ally of *Injuri* is *Divisio;* and the moral of the piece is the evil result of discord[1].

[1] I add a reference to two productions which may be most conveniently noticed here, as in fact moral-plays by the nature of their design as well as execution. 'R. W.,' the author of *The Three Ladies of London* (printed in 1584 'as it hath been publiquely played') and *The Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London* (printed in 1590), has been conjectured by Mr. Collier to have been an actor of the name of Robert Wilson (who was one of the Earl of Leicester's players in 1574, was adopted into the Queen's company in 1583, and was buried at Cripplegate in 1600) and a different person from the dramatist of the same name mentioned *infra*, p. 237. See Collier's *Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1846), Introduction, p. xviii, *note*, and p. 131. In any case he was a writer of considerable fluency, and, as the second of these plays shows, able to accommodate himself to the fashion of lively prose dialogue which Lyly had brought into favour. The plots of these moralities are little if at all in advance of those of earlier compositions of the kind. The three Ladies are *Lucre*, *Love*, and *Conscience*, of whom the two latter are in the first piece perverted by the machinations of Lucre and Dissimulation, and the rest of her servants; while in the second the three are wooed by three series of gallants, respectively Lords of London (*Policy*, *Pomp*, and *Pleasure*), Lords of Spain (*Pride*, *Ambition*, and *Tyranny*), and Lords of Lincoln (*Desire*, *Delight*, and *Devotion*). The London and Spanish Lords (each of whom has an appropriate Page—indeed the *dramatis personae* of this piece are bewildering in their multiplicity) engage in a contest manifestly intended to refer to the times of the Spanish Armada in which this play must have been written. In its predecessor one or two concrete personages are introduced by the side of the allegorical abstractions; one of these (Judge Nemo) plays a less important part in the second piece; another (the Jew Gerontus) is curious as the representation of an honest Jew, who is favourably contrasted with his Christian adversary Mercatore:

> 'One may judge and speak truth, as appears by this;
> Jews seek to excel in Christianity and Christians in Jewishness.'

The name Gerontus, as Mr. Collier observes, cannot fail to recall that of 'Gernutus, the Jew of Venice,' the hero of the ballad referred to *infra*, p. 390. There is no resemblance in the characters of Gernutus, Barabas, or Shylock to that of Gerontus; but there are some odd similarities of expression between the scene in *The Three Ladies* and the trial-scene in *The Merchant of Venice* ('reverend judge' . . . 'most puissant judge' . . . 'Pay me the principal'). In both of the plays *Simplicity* supplies the place of clown; in the first singing an appropriate song, with the burden,

> 'Simplicity sings it, and 'sperience doth prove,
> No dwelling in London, no biding in London, for Conscience and Love;'

and in the second paying a tribute to the memory of Tarlton as the prince of merry fellows. Cf. *infra*, p. 249, note 1. The main distinction between these two works and the older moralities lies in a greater ease of style; in conception and in construction they represent no progress whatever.

Moralities resembling comedy and tragedy.

The moralities proper survived in England to the close of the sixteenth century, and even into the first years of the seventeenth. But by this time the regular drama had long flourished, and to it the moralities in the end necessarily gave way. The transitions by which the moralities, as well as the mysteries, respectively developed into branches of the regular drama will be indicated below; here it may finally be pointed out that we have a considerable number of plays, chiefly from the latter half of the sixteenth century, which hover doubtfully on the boundary-line between morals and comedies or tragedies. In these pieces the tendency, already observable in some of the moralities described above, to introduce real human personages of a typical kind by the side of allegorical abstractions, is more systematically and fully pursued. Those among them in which both action and characters are still in the main allegorical may be classed with the moralities rather than with our earliest comedies and tragedies. Such appears to be the case with the play of *Tom Tiler and his Wife*[1] (1578), where allegorical characters, *Desire* the Vice among them, mix with *Tom Tiler* and *Tom Tailor*, while Tom Tiler's wife, called *Strife*, is half an abstraction, half a type. In *The Nice Wanton*[2] (1560) 'ye may see Three branches of an ill tree: The mother and her children three, Two naught and one godly'—real human types; but the action is as simple as that of any morality, and *Iniquity* plays his usual part. *Jack Juggler*[3], though apparently earlier in date, already furnishes the shred of a plot, borrowed from the *Amphitryo* of Plautus; the piece resembles those 'drolls' of a later period which consist of a farcical episode taken from a popular play; the characters bear typical names. In certain productions of a more ambitious cast, such as *Apius and Virginia*, *King Cambises*, and in Bale's *Kyng Johan*, though allegorical personages still appear, the action and the main characters are historical; and the element of the morality holds a secondary place. Finally, as we

[1] Collier, ii. 353. [2] Printed in Hazlitt's Dodsley, vol. ii. [3] Printed *ib.*

shall see, in the Interludes and in the Chronicle Histories proper the allegorical characters are altogether dropped.

I have thus pursued to the point at which it is legitimate to speak of the beginnings of the regular English drama, the two main growths from which it took its origin. Before concluding this chapter, it only remains to advert very briefly to a third species of entertainment, not properly dramatic, but containing dramatic elements, which from an early period existed by the side of the other two. The origin of the term *pageants* has been already explained. The expression properly applies to the moveable scaffold on which both miracle-plays and moralities were originally represented; but it is usual to confine it to moving shows devoid of either action or dialogue, or at least only employing their aid by way of supplementing and explaining the living picture. These easily intelligible allegorical spectacles naturally enjoyed a wide-spread and lasting popularity[1]. Into England the pageantry which, especially in London, obtained so great a hold over the populace, seems to have been introduced from Flanders, the home of spectacular luxury in the latter part of the Middle Ages[2], and in particular from Antwerp, where a procession of the trades (*de groote Ommeganck*) was customary from an early date. The first of these shows on

Pageants.

[1] Similar exhibitions were known to the Romans, among whom they doubtless grew out of the triumphal processions. Every one remembers the *ingentes Rheni* mentioned by Persius (*Sat.* vi. 47); at a later date it seems to have been more usual to carry on gigantic scaffoldings pictorial and sculptured illustrations of the glories of a campaign. See the extract from Josephus (vii. 5) quoted by Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte Roms*, ii. 145.

[2] See, in general, the picturesque descriptions in the first volume of Kirk's *History of Charles the Bold*. An engraving and description of an Antwerp pageant, held in 1594, are given in Sharp's *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 25. In France the *entremets* and *tableaux*, the figures in which were taken from Scripture or religious legend, or were allegorical, long continued popular from an early date. In the sixteenth century figures from classical mythology were introduced. Ebert, *u. s.*, pp. 37–8. In Italy, too, we hear of these pageants; see *e. g.* Macchiavelli, *History of Florence*, vii. 5. For an account of the *trionfi* and other Italian pageants of the Renascence period, see Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, Sect. 5. A full account of the London pageants, from which I have borrowed in the text, will be found in F. W. Fairholt's *Lord Mayor's Pageants*, *Percy Society's Publ.*, vol. x.

Earliest English pageants.

City pageants.

record in England is that described by Matthew Paris as having taken place in 1236, on the occasion of the passage of King Henry III and Eleanor of Provence through the City to Westminster. On the return of Edward I from his victory over the Scots in 1298 occurred the earliest exhibition of shows connected with the City trades. These processions were in England frequently called *ridings*[1].

To about the same period belongs the first detailed description which we possess of a pageant in the more modern sense of the term, Walsingham's account of the reception of Richard II by the citizens in 1377. There were pageants under Henry IV, one on Henry V's return from Agincourt[2], and another on Henry VI's return from France after his coronation. The first description of the Lord Mayor's own pageantry, on the day of his entrance upon the duties of his office, dates from 1533[3]. Similar gratulatory pageants were exhibited in other cities[4]; the Lord Mayor's pageants, however, of course remained pre-eminent[5]. Many of our early dramatists exercised their ingenuity upon them; Peele's *Descensus Astraeae*, and several productions by Munday, Dekker, Thomas Heywood, and Middleton, belong to this class. They dealt in patriotic and moral allegories, as well as in direct illustrations of the glories of the City or of the particular City Company to which the Lord Mayor belonged, such as the *Triumphs of Old Drapery, or The Rich Clothing of England*, and

[1] So Chaucer relates of the idle apprentice, Perkin Revelour, that

> 'whan ther any riding was in Chepe
> Out of the shoppe thider wold he lepe,
> And til that he had all the sight ysein,
> And danced wel, he would not come agein.' (*The Coke's Tale.*)

[2] Described by Lydgate (who probably wrote the songs for the occasion).

[3] In this year Queen Anne Boleyn was by royal command welcomed in the City 'likewyse as they use to dooe when the Maior is presented on the morrow after Symon and Jude.' This procession was by water.

[4] Queen Margaret was welcomed to Coventry in 1455 by a pageant, of which the scheme has been preserved, and which introduces Scriptural, historical, and allegorical personages, several of whom speak a few lines of obeisance. (See Sharp, *u. s.*, p. 145 *seqq.*)

[5] 'I do not think,' says Spendall in *Green's Tu Quoque* (pr. 1614), 'but to be Lord Mayor of London before I die, and have three pageants carried before me, besides a ship and an unicorn.'

sanaleia; the Golden Fishing, or the Honour of Fishers[1]. These City pageants continued in favour till utbreak of the Civil War, when the very maypoles extirpated by command of the Parliament. It may lded that they were revived in 1655, Sir Roger Tich- Mayor, exhibiting one in 1656; that the last poet exerted his brains on this class of performances was mmortal Elkanah Settle; and that about the begin- of the eighteenth century they seem to have sunk e level at which it is rumoured that they still remain. ese public pageants have but little importance for the r history of our drama; they served, however, to en- ge that love of spectacle which has at different times an aid or a danger to the dramatic art, and helped to nt the drama in its infancy from falling into too w grooves. As an exceptional phenomenon, the so- *Hox Tuesday Play* at Coventry may perhaps deserve on. In the main it was a pantomimic representation fight, but it is stated to have been accompanied by ez.' It commemorated the overthrow of the Danes by ien of Coventry, where it was exhibited from the year and in 1575 was witnessed by Queen Elisabeth. The ical origin of the festival (either the massacre of St. s day or the death of Hardicanute) and the doubtful ology of the name I cannot pretend to discuss; if this mance was not, properly speaking, a historical play, ms at least to have been something more than a mere show in memory of a historical event[2].

Hox Tuesday Play.

h by Munday. A humorous description of the 'Marchant Taylers' s will be found in the Second Part of the old play of *Promos and Cas*act i. sc. v.

Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 125 *seqq.* This must have been the per- e in which Captain Cox took a part, whose ghost, 'mounted in his orse,' delivered the so-called '*Masque of Owls, at Kenelworth*,' written by son in 1626:—

'And being a little man,
When the skirmish began
'Twixt the Saxon and the Dane
(For thence the story was ta'en)
He was not so well seen
As he would have been o' the queen.'

Court entertainments.

Lastly, the amusements of the Court and of the great houses of the nobility from a very early date consisted of entertainments partaking to a greater or less degree of a dramatic character. These entertainments were partly conducted by paid servants, partly by the members of the Court themselves. 'Disguisings' and 'mummings,' *i.e.* dances or other appearances in costume, no doubt often of a figurative description, were in vogue at Court from the time of Edward III; under Henry V was exhibited, on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor Sigismund, what appears to have been a pantomimic representation of the *Life of St. George*. Under Edward IV the Duke of Gloucester kept a body of 'players;' and under Henry VII there were three royal establishments of actors, the players of interludes, the Prince's (Arthur's) players, and the gentlemen of the chapel; and some of the great nobles likewise had their companies, while others were attached to particular towns. The entertainments at Court, which were doubtless very various, were superintended by an Abbot or Lord of Misrule. But a new impulse was given to this, as to every other form of amusement, by the accession of Henry VIII. Early in his reign (1512–13) there was introduced, as a new species of entertainment from Italy, the '*mask*,' which appears to have differed from the earlier 'disguisings' by the circumstance of the dancers wearing masks as well as costume. Such a 'mask' is that described by Cavendish in his *Life of Wolsey*, and introduced with great effect by Shakspere into his *Henry VIII*[1]. Inasmuch as moralities were represented at Court and exercised their influence upon its tastes, the degree of action introduced into the disguisings and masks varied considerably; at times decorations or 'properties' (the term is ancient) were employed; and on special occasions the various kinds of entertainment were no doubt combined

Masks.

[1] The *Pageant of the Nine Worthies*, out of which so much fun is made in Shakspere's *Love's Labour's Lost*, was represented in Queen Mary's time. 'Each' of the Worthies, says Strype, 'made his speech,' no doubt commencing, as in the comedy, with 'I Pompey am,' 'Judas I am,' &c. Cf. Warton's *Hist. of Engl. Poetry*, sec. liii. See the definition of a masque in *Tale of a Tub*, act. v. sc. 2.

into exhibitions of a very elaborate description. At Henry VIII's Court we accordingly hear of many kinds of more or less dramatic entertainments—of a Latin satirical play, in which Luther and his wife were derisively introduced; of morals acted by the King's players and the children of the Chapel Royal; of 'interludes,' comprising a morrice-dance presented by ladies and gentlemen of the Court; of 'masks' and 'disguisings' of various sorts; on one occasion (in 1520) even of a 'goodly comedy of Plautus,' doubtless in Latin. In 1544, or more probably at an earlier date, all the amusements of the Court were placed under the control of a *Magister jocorum, revellorum et mascorum;* and under Edward VI this office of Master of the Revels acquired a superior significance by the appointment to it of 'a wise gentleman and learned,' George Ferrers, with whose name we shall meet again. Earlier, however, in the same reign—in August, 1549—the representation of all plays and interludes throughout the realm had been prohibited for the term of three months on account of their seditious and disorderly tendency; in 1551 the special license of the Privy Council was declared necessary for the performances of players attached to the households of noblemen; and in 1552 the special license of the Privy Council was made requisite for all players in the case of any performance in the English tongue, (as well as for all printers and booksellers in the case of any English publication whatever). Interludes, masks, and similar entertainments continued, however, to be produced, so that on the accession of Mary in 1553 a proclamation was issued requiring the Queen's special license for the performance of plays (as well as the publication of writings and the preaching of public discourses) in any way concerning religion. The effect of this prohibition was to stop the representation of all plays for two years; and on the revival of dramatic performances they were totally suppressed by order of the Star-chamber in 1556. London, however, seems to have been excepted, probably because of the disfavour with which plays were regarded by its civic authorities themselves; and here a regulation was enforced restricting the

The government and the stage.

performance of plays, when licensed by the bishop, to the period between All Saints' and Shrovetide. At Court, however, masks and interludes continued to be performed under Queen Mary, who likewise encouraged the representation of miracle-plays in London. We have thus reached the reign of Elisabeth, who after first issuing a general prohibition against dramatic performances, on the 16th of May, 1559, ordered that they should be permitted, if licensed by the mayors of towns or lord-lieutenants of counties, or two justices of the peace; but that no play touching on matters of religion or government should in any case be licensed. At Court, interludes, masks, and revels continued as before; plays had been performed before Elisabeth already in her brother's reign; and her taste for such entertainments never left her. In her palaces and on her progresses she was amused in this way; we shall see how the Universities and the Inns of Court vied with one another in providing such diversions; and her great nobles kept their companies of players. Among these, the company of the Earl of Leicester was, in May 1574, granted the privilege of performing within the city of London, and within any cities, towns, and boroughs throughout England. The Common Council of the City of London sought to make its license necessary for every public exhibition, and otherwise to hamper the players, whom it regarded with so much hostility. The result was, that the players sought to establish themselves in places beyond the jurisdiction of the city authorities, though locally within the city. Thus James Burbadge and others, the players of the Earl of Leicester, in 1576 converted some rooms situate in the precinct of the dissolved monastery of the *Blackfriars* into a play-house; and, apparently in the same year, the '*Theatre*' was erected at *Shoreditch*, and another building for the same purpose, called the *Curtain*[1], hard by.

Earliest play-houses.

The same point of time shows the Court entertainments of this reign at the full height of their developement; and

Elisabethan entertainments.

[1] As to the origin of this name see *Shaksp. Soc. Papers*, vol. i. p. 29 *seqq.*

the name of Queen Elisabeth's favourite once more connects itself with the most brilliant of all the Court entertainments of her reign on record, those *Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth* which were exhibited in the year 1575, with the hope of dazzling the Queen into a consent to bestow upon Leicester that highest favour which she still withheld. Several accounts remain to us of this unrivalled display[1], to which I shall have to refer again in the course of this book. And with a mention of them may be concluded this rapid summary of the Court entertainments containing a dramatic element, as well as the brief sketch of the origin of the English stage, which I have for convenience' sake connected with it, and which it is beyond my purpose to pursue in detail. Not Leicester only, but political wisdom itself in the person of Cecil, did not disdain to give attention to these royal diversions. A pageant for the meeting between Elisabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, which was intended to take place in 1562, but which never came to pass, was devised by some writer of the day, and the scheme still remains among Cecil's papers[2].

In my next chapter I shall have to go back once more to a rather earlier date in sketching the beginnings of the English regular drama. But I desired to bring together at once the various growths, differing in origin though at many points in contact with and under the influence of one another, out of which that drama sprang.

Summary.

In England no accurate distinction was ever drawn between *mysteries* and *miracle-plays*, and the latter term was employed as including the former. But literary terminology, without aiming at a pedantic accuracy, must distinguish between the miracle-play as primarily of literary, and the mystery as primarily of religious, *i.e.* liturgical origin. The two growths took root in England soon after the Norman Conquest, and, with the co-operation of the

[1] By Laneham, a retainer of Leicester's, and Gascoyne, one of the poets employed (reprinted in Nichols's *Progresses of Queen Elisabeth*), and by Dugdale (*Antiquities of Warwickshire*).

[2] See its text in Collier, i. 183. To Mr. Collier's first volume I am of course indebted for the facts mentioned in the rapid summary above.

professional entertainers brought over by that event, though not derived from them, combined as the English religious drama. Though the mystery bore the name of the miracle, it was the latter which was absorbed by the former. In the hands, first of ecclesiastics, then of laymen, it became a popular form of dramatic entertainment, and, especially in the developed shape of the collective mystery, survived with little material alteration to the close of the sixteenth century.

The English *moralities* cannot be traced back further than the middle of the fifteenth century, though the distinctive elements of this species of production are to be occasionally noticed in every stage of the religious drama. They were the result of tastes partly indigenous to the English soil, partly due to the influence of French literature. Their form they borrowed in England from the popular religious drama; but they never attained to a widespread influence like that which it possessed, because it was not till the period of the Reformation that they concerned themselves with questions of immediate and lively interest to the nation at large. Even then, they could only fitfully address themselves to such topics. And in this period they had already begun to lose their distinctive character by admitting among their *dramatis personae* real types of humanity by the side of personified abstractions. In this modified form they too survived to about the close of the sixteenth century.

The *pageants* (using the term in a more restricted sense), *masks*, and similar entertainments had been introduced in the middle of the fourteenth century; and continued as public and private spectacles to enjoy favour down to the middle of the seventeenth century. But though containing dramatic elements, they could never, as lacking the essential element of a real dramatic action, develope into a genuine dramatic form. They continued by the side of the regular drama, as they had existed by the side of its progenitors, influencing its course, but not really having part in it. In the days of its first decline, they combined with it into a hybrid species, which, under the name of the

masque, will claim attention as an illegitimate outgrowth of our dramatic literature.

Such were, as they presented themselves on English soil, the phenomena of the origin of the modern drama. The transitions which led directly to the beginnings of the regular English drama, and those beginnings themselves, will form the subject of my Second Chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ENGLISH REGULAR DRAMA.

By the term 'the beginnings of the regular drama' I mean the birth of the two species into which, though frequently intermingling them, all dramatic literature divides itself.

The tragic and the comic.

The broad distinction between the tragic and the comic is peculiar neither to dramatic literature nor to literature in general among the intellectual creations of man. Ignorance and dulness indeed pass through the world without any clear consciousness of either the tragic or comic elements which life contains; for apathy is the miserable privilege of the empty or unawakened mind. But wherever the power of sympathy or antipathy is consciously possessed, the mind is necessarily alive to that difference upon which the only satisfactory definitions of the tragic and the comic, and of tragedy and comedy, depend. The difference is primarily one of subject; but inasmuch as the secret of all true art lies in appropriate, and therefore pleasing treatment, it is a difference of treatment also. It therefore applies to the entire character and effect of a dramatic work, and is not to be determined by the mere accident of the nature of its termination. It is accordingly impossible to accept as sufficient, or even as consistently maintainable, the popular distinction which is supported by the critical authority of Polonius. The circumstance that the hero of a play 'kills himself,' or is killed by somebody

else, does not constitute it a tragedy; and, conversely, the happy ending of a play does not establish it as a comedy[1]. Aristotle's definitions will better serve the purpose. According to his view, that which distinguishes tragedy as a dramatic species is the importance and magnitude of its subject, the adequate elevation of its literary form, and the power of the emotions—pity and terror—by means of which it produces its effects. Comedy, on the other hand, imitates actions of inferior interest ('neither painful nor destructive'), and carried on by characters whose vices are of a ridiculous kind.

Elements of tragic and comic effect in the miracles and moralities.

It is accordingly manifest that elements of both tragic and comic effect already existed in those early compositions of which the origin and progress have been already traced. In the period when the so-called miracles and the moralities were simultaneously flourishing in England, and had attained to as high a point of developement as they at any time reached,—in the former half of the sixteenth century, the age of the English Reformation,—both the one and the other species had advanced far in the direction of tragic as well as comic effectiveness. The religious plays habitually dealt with subjects of unequalled, and, to the age to which they belonged, of all but unrivalled importance, challenging the deepest sympathies and the keenest antipathies of their audiences. To secure popular favour,

[1] It has become customary to treat the serious drama which ends happily as a species co-ordinate with tragedy and comedy, whereas it is in reality only a subordinate species of the former. This has been well shown by G. Freytag in his admirable *Technik des Dramas* (second edition), pp. 96–97. He reminds us, how 'already in the time of Aeschylus and Sophocles a gloomy ending was by no means indispensable to tragedy; of seven extant plays of Sophocles, two, the *Ajax* and the *Philoctetes*, and in the eyes of the Athenians also the *Oedipus Coloneus*, have a peaceful ending which gives a turn for the better to the fate of the hero. Even in Euripides, celebrated in the *Poetics* for loving a gloomy ending, among seventeen tragedies (exclusively of the *Alcestis*), four (*Helena*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Andromache*, *Ion*) end like a modern 'drama' (*Schauspiel*); in several others the unhappy ending seems accidental and not accounted for by dramatic motives.' Freytag concludes that the Athenian public resembled that of our own days in preferring a happy ending. This tendency was not long ago humorously illustrated by the London public's forcing a popular play-wright (Mr. Dion Boucicault) to recall to life a heroine whom he had put to death in the first edition of a play called *The Octoroon*.

they had introduced a considerable admixture of ludicrous characters, passages, and scenes, and had constituted it virtually an integral part of themselves. The moralities, on the other hand, had familiarised their spectators with personifications of the loftiest of virtues, as well as of the meanest and most ridiculous kinds of vices. They had likewise given bodily form to many conceptions involving the highest interests of their public, or again coming nearest home to its business and bosoms.

Limits of their operation.

But from an artistic point of view the miracles had failed to correspond in dignity of form to the sublimity of their subjects. The action of a collective mystery was indeed, regarded as a whole, of the utmost magnitude; but the connexion between the several 'pageants' merely underlay the often fragmentary action of each. The endless repetition of the well-known episodes of the Sacred Narrative had deprived them of freshness of interest. And so stereotyped had the characters become, that pity or terror could hardly be aroused, except in a very modified degree, in a spectator moderately experienced. The cohesion between the several plays was epical rather than dramatic; and the emotions aroused by each could rarely amount to more than a faint curiosity, which they contrived to gratify either by the addition of new external effects or by trifling comic intermezzos weakening the total tragic impression.

The moralities, artificial in their origin, could produce no powerful results by their didactic abstractions, which, ringing the changes on a not very flexible system of arguments, addressed themselves in the first place to the intellectual faculties, and only secondarily to the moral sympathies of their audiences. To move real men and women into something beyond a calm acquiescence in indubitable moral truths, it was necessary either to give these truths a practical application to relations of immediate personal interest, or to make the representatives of abstract qualities and ideas types of their most familiar human embodiments. Pity and terror on the one hand, and contemptuous dislike on the other, could only be excited in a high degree by

abandoning the basis on which the moralities were constructed.

The transition suggested by their defects.

What more natural, then, than that it should have suggested itself to develope both the miracles and moralities in the directions suggested by observation of these defects? To apply a dramatic treatment similar to that of the miracles to personages and passages of profane history, and one similar to that of the moralities to actual types of contemporary life, was therefore an advance which may seem to have been of its nature inevitable. The transition was so easy, that the difficulty lies rather in understanding why it took so long to accomplish. All classes of the population were familiar with the characters and events of religious history and legend; it was only necessary that a similar acquaintance should come to prevail with personages of profane history and their deeds, and these could not fail to gain admission to the popular stage. Such an acquaintance was, however, only gradually produced by the influences of the Renascence and Reformation, which led both to a more widely-spread knowledge of the national history, to a study of classical historical works, and to the introduction of foreign, especially Italian, narrative literature into England. On the other hand, the tendency towards substituting real types for personified abstractions had long been asserting itself in individual instances. Some such types had of course found their way into the mysteries from the very first, or rather the mysteries had found them ready to hand in the Sacred Narrative on which they were based[1]; but many moralities had likewise admitted them; and the figure of the *Vice* had been a half-concrete being from the outset, and frequently a type of the mischievous fool pure and simple.

In general, moreover, it will not be forgotten that the religious plays and the moralities had never been kept absolutely distinct. Whatever new species of dramatic production formed itself, was accordingly likely to contain elements of both the one and the other. Yet, as it happened, in England at all events tragedy and comedy arose

[1] I refer to such characters as the *Shepherds*, *Soldiers*, *Tortores*, &c.

neither consentaneously nor simultaneously. Both took their rise more immediately from the moralities, though the mysteries were not unconnected with the beginnings of tragedy.

Impulse derived from the Classical and the Italian drama.

Lastly, both tragedy and comedy, before they sprang into independent being, needed the impulse of foreign literary examples. These were supplied by Classical literature, the study of which advanced in England without any real interruption throughout the greater part of the sixteenth century; and by the literature of that country which was not only the birthplace, but long the favourite home of the Renascence. At a critical time in the history of the English drama, our dramatists became familiar, not only with Classical and Italian subjects, but also with Classical and Italian plays. Though it is well known that a company of Italian actors visited England and performed before the Queen in the year 1578, the direct influence of Italian examples traceable in the efforts of many of our early dramatists has been hitherto rather under- than over-estimated[1].

These general remarks will suffice to introduce a brief account of the beginnings of English tragedy and comedy respectively. Though it was comedy which sooner attained to an independent life of its own in England, it may be more appropriate to speak of tragedy in the first instance.

Long before the influence of the Renascence movement asserted itself on the English drama, Italian tragedy had seized on subjects of national interest as well as of Classical origin, and had imitated in form the most familiar Latin model of Classical tragedy. Alberto Mussato's *Eccerinis* was the work of a Paduan born only three years after the

[1] Cf. Klein, iv. 560; with reference to Collier, i. 235 and iii. 398; and to a well-known passage in *The Spanish Tragedy:*

'The Italian Tragedians were so sharp of wit,
That in one hour's meditation
They would perform anything in action.'

Though the Italian actors may therefore be concluded to have usually played the improvised comedies, which under the name of *Commedie dell' Arte* will have to be noticed below, they also carried with them regular plays, so-called *Commedie Erudite*, which had to be got by heart.

death of the tyrant Ezzelino himself[1]; and though the play is written in Latin, and is a close imitation of Seneca, from whose *Thyestes* it even borrows a passage *verbatim*, its subject is one of immediately national interest. Another Latin drama of the same century treats a contemporary event, the *Capture of Cesena*[2]; and Landivio, a poet of the fifteenth century, commemorates in another Latin tragedy the *Captivity* and death of a famous captain of its times[3]. When, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Italian tragic poets began to compose in their own tongue, they generally preferred classical subjects, though we meet with a *Rosmonda*[4]; so that by the time when the English drama came into contact with the Italian, the example of the latter no longer pointed in a direction which the former had already in an earlier period come to pursue of its own accord.

Early indications of the transition from the religious to the secular drama.

Of the influence of Italian examples it would therefore at present be premature to speak. It is, however, strange that it should not have independently suggested itself to the minds of many of the authors of our later miracle-plays to widen their range of subjects so as to include dramatic versions of secular narrative. When historical figures such as Octavian and Tiberius Caesar found their way into the religious plays, and Pompey the Great and other heroes of profane lore into the pageants, the step might seem to have been so easy to the dramatic treatment of an entire *passus* of secular history or of pseudo-historical romance, that the only wonder is that this step should hardly ever have been taken[5]. An exception may perhaps be noted in the instance of a play acted at Chester in 1529, the title of which was *Robert Cicill, i.e.* King Robert of Sicily. It was doubtless founded on the old romance of that name, and showed, according to a letter

Robert Cicill (1529).

[1] Mussato was born 1261, and died 1330. Klein, v. 235.

[2] A.D. 1357; *ib.* 251.

[3] *De Captivitate Ducis Jacobi tragoedia.* J. P. was executed in 1464; *ib.*

[4] By G. Rucellai, 1515. The earliest tragedy in Italian is Galeotto del Carretto's *Sofonisba*, acted 1502; *ib.* Trissino's *Sofonisba* and Martelli's *Tullia* followed; *ib.* 251–305.

[5] One or two French 'profane mysteries' have been already noted.

from the Mayor and Corporation of Chester discovered by Mr. Collier, how its hero 'was warned by an Aungell whiche went to Rome, and shewyd Kyng Robart all the powre of God, and what thynge yt was to be a pore man; and thanne, after sondrye wanderynges, ledde hym backe agayne to his kingdom of Cicylye, where he lyved and raygned many yeres[1].' It was therefore to all intents and purposes a miracle-play, and is to be classed with productions of this kind rather than regarded as a precocious attempt in the direction of historical tragedy.

The beginnings of the study of national history.

Our own national history had long been a sealed book to the people. Though chronicles had been composed in a long succession, which even the Wars of the Roses had been unable wholly to break, their authors had been chiefly ecclesiastics, and their design had never been to gratify such interest in the past as might exist in the public at large. But the Renascence brought with it into England the first attempts at historical writing of a more attractive description; an Italian wrote English history in Latin under the first two Tudors[2]; and already Henry VII's reign produced in Fabyan's Chronicle, or *Concordance of Histories*, the earliest of a series of historical efforts in the native tongue destined to exercise an enduring effect upon the sentiments of the nation. It was not indeed part of the policy of Henry VIII to use the art of printing, as it was used by the German reformers, for the encouragement of a spirit which should be at once national and anti-Roman; but of the 'new learning' spread by the Renascence and the Reformation, some study of national history, and a consequent endeavour to produce historical works in a widely acceptable literary form, inevitably formed part. It was impossible, especially in a people so ineradicably conservative as the English, that a great political as well as religious change should accomplish itself without a conscious appeal on the part of its advocates to the historical past of the nation. The Tudor dynasty availed itself of the beginnings of our modern historical literature

[1] Collier, i. 113-115; ii. 128.

[2] Polydore Virgil.

to blacken its adversaries and glorify its members—(I shall have an opportunity of speaking of the influence of such works as More's *Life of Richard III* below);—and the Reformers, when advocating their doctrines and attacking the practices of the Church of Rome, were as a matter of course led to recur to the memory of national struggles carried on of old, if not for the same ends, at all events against the same opponents.

While therefore, as has been already seen, the mysteries themselves did not remain wholly unaffected by the spirit of the Reformation, and while the moralities were designedly made vehicles for the inculcation of its principles and tenets, the attempt to call in the aid of national history could not fail to be made in a more systematic form. With the help of the existing chronicles of past reigns, a practical lesson might be read to the living generation; and of all the forms of the controversial morality, if I may use the expression, that of the historical morality seemed most to recommend itself by its impressiveness, its interest, and its comparative safety. It was at once more effective than the morality pure and simple, and less dangerous in days of sudden shifts and changes than the political morality in the stricter sense of the term.

Origin of the Chronicle History.

Such must have been the origin of the so-called *Chronicle History*, of which the earliest specimen remaining to us closely connects itself with the moral-plays. This is the *Kyng Johan* of Bishop Bale.

Bishop Bale (1495–1563).

John Bale was born in Suffolk in 1495, and was educated partly in a monastery at Norwich, partly at St. John's College, Cambridge. Here he became a Protestant, and married. He was favoured by Cromwell, on whose execution he withdrew into the Low Countries, where he resided eight years, naturally finding much time for literary occupation. He was recalled to England on the accession of Edward VI, who bestowed upon him, first a living, and then an Irish bishopric—that of Ossory. His consecration, however, was speedily followed by the accession of Mary; and after many troubles he once more fled to the Continent, whence he only returned on the death of the Queen.

Her successor bestowed on him a prebendary's stall at Canterbury, where he died in 1563.

His dramatic works.

Of his works we are only concerned with those falling under the head of dramatic pieces. These were, by his own account, extremely numerous, comprising a series of 'comedies,' which appear to form a species of collective mystery of the life of Christ, from His boyhood to the Resurrection, and other plays, religious and secular. The titles of some of the latter sufficiently illustrate the political and religious standpoint of Bale: *Upon both Marriages of the King* (Henry VIII); *The Treacheries of the Papists; Of the Impostures of Thomas a Beckett*[1]. Of this description of plays by Bale *Kyng Johan* alone is preserved, while of the miracle-plays which, using an ambiguous expression, Bale says he 'compiled,' four remain. Of these, as belonging to a class of compositions already sufficiently described, a passing notice will suffice.

God's Promises (1538).

The three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ remains in MS. It is presumably of the same description as *God's Promises*[2], which has been printed. This latter play, written in 1538, is a mystery of the simplest kind of construction; but its diction is that of a learned writer, and the theological argument or concatenation is developed with precision and strict consecutiveness. The Promises are those made by God to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and John the Baptist, each of whom in turn, and in an *Actus* devoted to him, holds discourse with *Pater Coelestis*. Each of the seven 'Acts' concludes with an Antiphon sung by the particular interlocutor, and a prologue and epilogue are spoken by the author, Balaeus himself. The object of this composition is therefore edification pure and simple—

> 'No tryfeling sporte
> In fantasyes fayned, nor soche like gaudysh gere,
> But the thyngs that shall your inward stomake chear,
> To rejoice in God for your justyfycacyon,
> And alone in Christ to hope for your salvacyon.'

[1] See the list given by Bale in his *Scriptorum illustrium majoris Britanniae Catalogus* (first published in 1549), in Collier, ii. 238 *note*.

[2] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. i.

The Temptacyon of our Lorde[1], written in the same year, distinctly describes itself as an 'Acte,' or portion of a series. Though well and vigorously written, it is not otherwise remarkable except as containing very unmistakeable references of a controversial character to some of the institutions upon which the Reformation made war. Apart from the fact that the moral of the whole is, not to condemn fasting, but to show that its value lies merely in its being a fruit of faith, the opposition to the general reading of Scripture, and the preference shown by 'relygyouse men' for 'contemplacyon' rather than the study of the Scriptures, are directly or indirectly inveighed against. And the Tempter, who in the first instance assumes the habit of a hermit, explicitly expresses his conviction that, as the 'vycar at Rome' will be his friend, he may defy the Saviour himself.

The Temptacyon of our Lorde. (1538.)

A fourth mystery by Bale belongs in date of composition to the same year 1538. It is the 'brefe comedy or enterlude' of *Johan Baptystes preachynge in the Wyldernesse, &c.*[2] Its characters are the sacred personages of the passages in the Gospel which it paraphrases, and the typical figures of *Publicanus*, *Pharisaeus*, *Turba vulgaris*, *Miles armatus*, and *Sadducaeus*. Prologue and epilogue are here too supposed to be spoken by the author himself; and there are again references to the rupture with Rome. The Pharisee inveighs against the 'new lernynge' introduced by St. John (the term employed in *Kyng Johan* to signify the teaching of the Reformation), and all ambiguity is removed by the direct admonition of the Prologue not to listen to saints and founders of monastic orders, and to

Johan Baptyste. (1538.)

'Beleve neither Pope, nor prest of hys consent.'

But it is the play of *Kyng Johan*[3] which calls for more special notice. It was only discovered some time between 1831 and 1838, among old papers belonging to the Corporation of Ipswich, whence it found its way into the

Kyng Johan. (1548 circ.)

[1] Edited by the Rev. A. B. Grosart among the *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library*, vol. i. (1870).

[2] Printed in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. i.

[3] Edited by Mr. Collier in the *Camden Society's Publications*, 1838.

library of the Duke of Devonshire. Its editor, Mr. Collier, conjectures that it was performed by the guilds or trades of Ipswich. It contains a reference to King John's charitable foundations there and in the neighbourhood—

> 'Great monymentes are in Yppeswych, Donwych and Berye,
> Which noteth hym to be a man of notable mercye.'

About half of this play, including all the latter portion, is in Bale's handwriting, while the remainder is throughout carefully corrected by him, various passages being inserted for the sake of greater completeness. The name of Bale nowhere occurs, but as he enumerates a play under the title *De Joanne Anglorum Rege* among his dramatic works, and describes it as *in idiomate materno*, and as his handwriting is identifiable by other evidence, Mr. Collier thinks that no doubt can exist as to his authorship. Yet, with all deference, I cannot see any proof of the earlier part of *Kyng Johan* being Bale's own production, though, on the other hand, there is likewise no proof of the contrary. The work is in the MS. described as *two playes*, though it remains doubtful where No. I ended and No. II began. It might be surmised that No. I ended where we read *Finit Actus I*, about the middle of the whole, after a summary by the Interpreter (who here appears as a kind of chorus) of what has gone before. If, however, this be not the case, and the second play begins, as Mr. Collier thinks, at a considerably later point, where some confusion or omission occurs in the MS., and where Bale's own handwriting commences, it may be that only the second part was by him. In support of this possibility, it may be noticed, firstly, which is of little importance, that Bale in his *Summarium* gives, as a translation of the beginning of his play, Latin words, to which the actual beginning only very vaguely corresponds[1]; secondly, that there seems considerable difference between the earlier and the later portions, the earlier being (I think) at once more vigorous and effective in the serious, and coarser in the comic, passages. The conclusion, with an adulatory reference to Queen Elisabeth, is obviously a later addition;

[1] See Collier, Note I.

internal evidence sufficiently shows the play to have been written soon after Henry VIII's reign, and before, not after, that of Queen Mary. It is manifestly a production of the early years of the reign of Edward VI.

Of those years it breathes the very spirit—an emphatic defiance of the Pope and of Popery, thoroughly in consonance with the tendencies which animated the sway of Somerset and the Calvinistic reformers. These were the men who made war upon the relics of Roman ritual and Church wealth spared by Henry VIII, against which the author of *Kynge Ȝohan* inveighs with the utmost bitterness and vehemence. At no other time in the Tudor period was so 'thorough' a view in the ascendant in the reforming circles as to the authority of the temporal sovereign in Church as well as State; and it is this view which the play enforces with reiterated energy. The royal supremacy is repeatedly insisted upon in terms one may almost say of *gusto*, such as Cranmer would have heartily approved. It is curious, by the bye (and incidentally likewise points to an early date), that though the author vigorously denounces the absurdity of employing the Latin tongue in the services of the Church, he almost invariably makes his own quotations from Scripture (which are very copious) in Latin, as if that were the tongue after all most familiar to him as the language of the Bible.

The play (for I will treat it as a single one) begins with a speech from King John himself, declaring his lineage and position, and announcing his intention to do his duty by his people. To him enter 'Ynglond *vidua*'—a personification of the country as a widow, who at once beseeches the King to protect her from her oppressors. 'Who are these?' inquires the King. Her answer gives the keynote to all that follows, in these plain-spoken words—

> 'Suche lubbers as hath dysgysed heads in their hoodes
> Whych in ydlenes do lyve by other menns goodes,
> Monkes, chanons and nones in dyvers coloure and shappe,
> Bothe whyght blacke and pyed, God send their increase yll happe.'

The conference is interrupted by *Sedwsyon* (Sedition[1]),

[1] The spelling of the play is unusually wild.

who certainly proves deserving of the epithet of a 'lewde person,' speedily applied to him by the King. *Sedition* is in fact at once the main agent in the conduct of the play, and its solitary comic character. While therefore he represents the Vice of the moralities, he not only by his humorous (and ineffably coarse) sallies enlivens the progress of the action, but is the spirit of evil as well as the spirit of mockery. He makes very clear to King John the source of the mischief which is abroad in the realm, and in no measured terms exposes the iniquitous designs of the Pope, as well as the arts by which his emissaries have mastered the minds of the nobles, the clergy, and the lawyers, upon whom the King had imagined he could rely. Personifications representing these three orders of men—*Nobilyte*, *the Clargy*, and *Syvill* (Civil) *Order*—are then introduced to prove that *Sedition* has spoken the truth, but are constrained by the King to promise such obedience as he may demand from them. Hereupon the plot is hatched by *Sedition* and *Dissimulation* ('dan Davy Dyssymulacyon'), who recognise one another as cousins:—

'*S.* Knowest thou not thi cosyn Sedycyon?
D. I have ever loved both the and thy condycyon.
S. Thow must nedes, I trowe, for we cum of ij bretherne:
If thou remẽber owr fathers were on mans chylderne.
Thou comyst of Falshed and I of Prevy Treason.
D. Then Infydelyte our granfather ys by reson.
S. Mary, that ys trewe and his begyner Antycrist,
The great pope of Rome, or fyrst veyne popysh prist.'

After comparing their antecedents and principles, and finding them mutually satisfactory, these two worthies agree to summon to their aid *Pryvat Welth* and *Usurpyd Power*, who enter singing a canticle, and join in the conspiracy. The conspirators now severally assume the characters which are supposed to typify the qualities they represent, viz. *Dissimulation* becomes Raymundus[1], *Sedition* Stephen Langton Archbishop of Canterbury, *Private Wealth* Cardinal Pandulphus, and *Usurped Power* the Pope. They

[1] Is this name founded on a mistake? John's brother-in-law, Raymond IV of Toulouse, seems referred to; but he was anti-papal, and it is a priestly chronicle which calls him *Apostata*.

gree that an Interdict shall be issued, and the rule of 'opery fully established.

Thus ends the 'first act,' after the 'Interpretour' has summed up the position in the following stanzas, which may be quoted, as they will make unnecessary any close account of the remainder of the play:—

'In thys present acte we have to yow declaréd,
As in a mirrour, the begynnynge of Kynge Johan,
How he was of God a magistrate appoyntéd
To the governaunce of thys same noble regyon,
To see mayntayned the true faythe and relygyon;
But Satan the Devylle, which that time was at large,
Had so great a swaye that he coulde it not discharge.

Upon a good zele he attempted very farre
For welthe of thys realme to provyde reformacyon
In the Churche thereof, but they ded hym debarre
Of that good purpose; for by excommunycacyon
The space of vij yeares they interdyct thys nacyon.
These bloudsuppers thus of crueltie and spyght
Subdued thys good Kynge for executynge ryght.

In the second acte wylle apeare more playne,
Wherein Pandulphus shall hym excommunycate
Within thys hys lande, and depose hym from hys reigne.
All other princes they shall move hym to hate,
And to persecute after most cruell rate.
They wyll hym poison in their malygnyte
And cause yll report of hym alwayes to be[1].

This noble Kynge Johan, as a faythfull Moyses
Withstode proude Pharao for hys poore Israel,
Myndynge to brynge yt owt of the lande of darknesse,
But the Egyptanes did agaynst hym so rebell,
That hys poore people ded styll in the desart dwell,
Tyll that duke Josue, whych was our late Kynge Henrye,
Clerely brought us out in to the lande of mylke and honye.

[1] Cf. the passage in *Act I*:—

'*Nob.* He that dothe hate me the worse wyll tell my tale.
Yt is your fassyon soche Kyngs to dyscommend
As your abuses reforme or reprehend.
You pristes are the cawse that chronycles doth defame
So many prynces, and men of notable name,
For yow take upon yow to wryght them evermore,
And therfore Kyng Johan is lyke to rewe it sore,
Whan ye wryte his tyme, for vexing of the Clargy.'

There is much force in the remark, which is of course capable of general application, that upon a king's attitude towards the clergy the spirit in which his reign was chronicled to a great extent depended.

As a strong David, at the voyce of verytie,
Great Golye, the pope, he strake downe with hys slynge,
Restorynge agayne to a Crysten lybertie
Hys land and people, lyke a most vyctoryouse Kynge;
To hir first bewtye intendynge the Churche to brynge
From ceremonyes dead to the lyvynge wurde of the Lorde.
Thys the seconde acte wyll plenteously recorde.'

The view of King John's motives indicated in the above pervades the play, in one passage of which he is called a 'Loller,' *i.e.* Lollard. It need hardly be said that this view is a bold, not to say a monstrous, invention on the part of the enterprising author.

Under the pressure of the Interdict, *Nobility*, *Clergy*, and *Civil Order*, in spite of the remonstrances of the King, bend their knees before Langton and Pandulphus; then *Commynalte*, the personification of the suffering commons, who is blind as well as poor, and in whom, as the son of widowed *England*, the King had placed his last trust, tremblingly submits to the arrogant Cardinal; the forsaken King receives news that enemies from abroad are threatening him on every side; and thus at last he gives way and delivers up his crown.

The rest of the play (which from this point is in Bale's handwriting) is far less dramatically effective; the real dramatic climax being past. Further concessions are forced out of the King, whose enemies finally determine to make away with him by poison. *Dissimulation*, on being promised eternal bliss as his reward, assumes to himself the responsibility of the deed and its consequences. To the King, who is athirst, he enters in the guise of a monk, bearing a cup in his hand and singing a wassail-song[1]; and after himself swallowing half the poisoned draught,

[1] Perhaps the oldest in our language. It runs thus:—

'Wassayle, wassayle out of the mylke payle,
Wassayle, wassayle, as whyte as my nayle,
Wassayle, wassayle in snowe froste and hayle,
Wassayle, wassayle with partrich and rayle,
Wassayle, wassayle that muche doth avayle,
Wassayle, wassayle that never wyll fayle.'

It may be worthy of remark that the poisoning of King John at Swineshead monastery is a doubtful tradition.

persuades the King to drink the remainder. The treacherous monk then goes to his death, comforted by the belief that he 'dies for the Church with S. Thomas of Canterbury;' and then his royal victim dies (not on the stage), after forgiving his foes and uttering a farewell to England:—

> 'Farwell, swete Englonde, now last of all to the;
> I am ryght sorye I coulde do for the no more.
> Farwell ones agayne, yea, farwell for evermore.'

The whole of what follows may, in the irreverent language of the modern stage, be described as a *tag*. *Veryte* (Verity) expatiates on the King's virtues and good deeds[1], and on the lies which partisan historians have uttered against his memory, and inculcates at great length the doctrine of absolute obedience to princes. *Nobility*, *Clergy*, and *Civil Order* promise to amend their ways; and here at last the play might have come to a close, but the author could not forbear from bringing in, to wind up the action, what may be almost called a *deus ex machinâ* in the shape of one more personification—*Imperyall Majestie*. This abstraction, as I conclude, very thinly veils the royal or 'imperial' (for he liked that style) figure of Henry VIII, with whose sentiments the oration in favour of the royal supremacy is in very complete accordance. *Sedition* is called to account by *Imperial Majesty*, and though promised pardon if he will make a full confession is consigned to the hands of *Civil Order* for the expiation of his sins:—

> 'Have hym fourth, Cyvyle Order, and hang hym tyll he be dead,
> And on London brydge loke ye bestowe his head.'

This worthy having been taken away, after begging that some one will tell the Pope, so that he may be put in the litany and prayed to 'with candels' like Thomas Becket, there remains nothing to be said beyond some final words of admonition against sedition and popery. The exhortation against anabaptism and the tribute of praise to

[1] They consist in London Bridge having been built in his reign, and in his zeal 'as towchynge Christes religyon' having been proved by the expulsion of the Jews out of the realm. The list is not long, but Bale might have found it difficult to enlarge it, unless he had foreseen the greatness of Liverpool, to which King John gave its first charter.

Queen Elisabeth, as to the sovereign who may be a light to all other princes, are, as has been already indicated, in all probability later additions.

The importance of this play in the history of the English drama warrants the comparative length at which I have dwelt on it. It may be noted that, as in so many of the moralities, only a limited number of actors seems to have been contemplated for its performance. The *exits* and entrances of the principal characters (except King John) are so arranged as to admit of four, three, or two of them being played by the same person; and directions are frequent, such as *Go out Ynglond, and drese for Clargy.*

Poetical merit the play has little or none, though there are some very vigorous passages in the earlier part[1]. The metre is generally rhymed Alexandrines, very irregular as to the number of syllables; quatrains and triplets are frequently introduced; the stanza-form of the Interpreter's speech is Chaucerian.

Finally, it may be worth observing, that Bale's *Kyng Johan* was clearly unknown to the author of the *Troublesome Raigne of John K. of E.*, in two parts (first printed in 1591), which furnished Shakspere with materials for his tragedy on the same subject, and that it was equally unknown to Shakspere himself.

Classical studies under Mary and Elisabeth.

Bishop Bale's attempt remained, so far as we know, without any immediate successors. It had probably been made before Queen Mary's reign not only swept away for a time the creations of the spirit which had animated its

[1] See *e.g.* the passage in which *Clergy* interprets the text of the Queen's raiment of many colours as referring to the various monastic orders, which he enumerates with extraordinary volubility, whereupon King John remarks—

> 'Davyd meanyth vertuys by the same diversitye
> As in the said psalme yt is evydent to se,
> And not munkysh sects; but it is ever your cast
> For your advauncement the Scripturs for to wrast.'

There is some dramatic power exhibited in King John's struggle at the last, before giving way; and there is perhaps a touch of pathos in the poor 'Commonalty.' That, by the bye, there is not even the faintest reference to *Magna Charta*, will hardly surprise us in the case of so devoted an admirer of Henry VIII.

author[1], but sought to suppress by all the means in its power that freedom of expression of which the stage and the printing-press were already becoming joint agents. But Mary shared with her brother and sister, as well as with her father, a genuine love of learning; and the learning of the Renascence of course had its root and inmost being in the study of the classics. There is no real difference in the general aspect of our literature between the reign of Mary and the earlier part of the reign of Elisabeth; it would need a more than nice sense of discrimination to distinguish between the lyrical collections of the one and of the other; *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) is only the first of a long series of similars. All these anthologies display to the full an ardour in the pursuit of classical study which finds a natural outlet in translation. English versions of classical poems were produced both under Queen Mary, and in a copious flow which continued during the greater part of the reign of her successor. Both princesses were excellent scholars, and the taste of the age was in full accordance with their own. A translator of a classical poem was held to rank fully on the level of an original poet[2].

Translations of Classical poetry.

It is a phenomenon frequently observable in the history of the literature of translations, that marked attention is paid at one particular time to one particular author. We have at the present day hardly emerged from a period of translations of Homer as countless as the dimples on the surface of the sea; some years ago it used to be considered that few well-educated Englishmen had, at one time or the

[1] Bale caused some of his plays to be performed at Kilkenny, to the 'small contentation' of their Irish audience. Controversy seems altogether to have been the very breath of his nostrils; he was called, and not without reason, 'bilious Bale.'

[2] Thus, to take only one example, Peele, in the Prologue to his *Honour of the Garter* (1593), speaks with enthusiasm of 'our English *Fraunce*,

'A peerless sweet translator of our time,'

while he ranks Phaer, the translator of the *Aeneid* (1558), with the greatest names of the past:—

'Why thither post not all good wits from hence,
To Chaucer, Gower, and to the fairest *Phaer*
That ever ventur'd on great Virgil's works?'

Translations of Seneca's tragedies. (1559–1581.)

other, failed to try their hand at Goethe's *Faust*. That, among the Latin authors who attracted the attention of translators in the early days of Elisabeth, the tragic poet Seneca should have held a prominent place is easily explicable. Like his model Euripides, he stands in a far closer relation to modern sympathies than the serene Sophocles and the mystic Aeschylus; he is easy to be understood and swift to rouse quick emotions. Between the years 1559 and 1581 ten of Seneca's plays were translated by Jasper Heywood (the son of the author of the *Interludes*), Alexander Neville, John Studley, Thomas Nuce, and Thomas Newton; and the last-named in 1581 collected the efforts of all these 'laudable' writers[1] into a single volume, under the title of *Seneca: his tenne Tragedies, translated into Englysh*. These translations, which occasionally included original interpolations, are in no instance in blank verse; while the metres of the choruses are necessarily various, the favourite metre of the dialogue seems to be those couplets of fourteen-syllable lines, of which the best-known example is to be found in Chapman's *Homer*.

The circumstance that contemporary Italian tragedy was wholly under the influence of the example of Seneca will accordingly not warrant us in tracing his influence upon English dramatic literature through this secondary channel. It was not in the first instance from the Italian tragedians, such as Speroni and his successors, many of whom seasoned their plays with new elements of the horrible due to the tastes of themselves and their age, that the English translators and followers of Seneca derived their examples —but from Seneca himself. Subsequently indeed, but not in the first instance, the Italian imitators of Seneca doubtless themselves exercised a direct influence upon the progress of English tragedy, as will be incidentally shown.

To the direct influence then of Seneca, with whom the English literary world had thus been familiarised, is to be ascribed the composition of the first English tragedy which

[1] So they are called by Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poesie* (1584).

we possess. The author whose name (though he only wrote part of it) is generally remembered in connexion with it, is specially commended as a writer of sonnets by Jasper Heywood in his version of Seneca's *Thyestes*[1]; but he could in no case have escaped the influence of a literary world who had thus prominently been introduced to English scholars.

Gorboduc (Ferrex and Porrex), the first English tragedy. (1562.)

The first tragedy proper in the English language then is, in part at least, from the hand of a nobleman otherwise highly distinguished in our literary, as he was in our political, history, Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst. The first three acts were, in the first (unauthorised) edition, said to have been written by Thomas Norton, the last two by Sackville. A. W. Schlegel, in his *Lectures*[2], mentions *Gorboduc*[3] as the work of 'a lord of the time of Elisabeth,'—a perfunctory description to apply to one of the ablest diplomatists of a diplomatic age, and the author of the design, as well as the most powerful portion, of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, a work of high significance in English literature. But Schlegel, who proceeds to declare that Pope's 'praise of the regularity of this work, as fitting it to be one of the first of a school of classical dramas,' only proves Pope's ignorance of the primary elements of dramatic art, has, I think, misjudged the merits of this drama, and has been too readily followed by subsequent critics. The plot is thus stated in the *Argument of the Tragedie*—

'Gorboduc king of Britain divided his realm in his life-time to his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew father and mother. The nobility assembled and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue of the prince, whereby the succession to the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.'

[1] Morley, *First Sketch*, p. 330. For a list of the several plays of Seneca translated, and the authors of the several translations, see *ib.* pp. 327–8, an Collier, iii. 13 *seqq.* An account of the Italian tragedians who wrote under the influence of Seneca will be found in Klein, v. 321 *seqq.*

[2] Vol. ii. Part ii. p. 266. [Original.]

[3] Printed in vol. i. of Dodsley's *Old Plays*, and in vol. i. of the *Ancient British Drama*.

And this story, according to a recent historian of English literature[1], has 'no dramatic capabilities'! Yet it is an expansion of the ancient Theban story, and contains in it the essential elements of a host of other plays, among them Fletcher's *Bloody Brother* and Schiller's *Bride of Messina*. The execution is no doubt most directly based on Seneca's *Thebaïs*, though the subject is taken directly from British legend; it is the same as that which is treated by Warner in the work which is to be regarded as a successor of the *Mirror*, *Albion's England*, Book III, Canto 15. The motive incident at the beginning, the fatal act of premature generosity proceeding from a living monarch, is the same in essence as that of *King Lear*. The variety of incidents through which the play carries the spectator, leads to the adoption of a frequent change of scene, a licence borrowed not of course from ancient, but possibly from contemporary Spanish, models. Otherwise the usages of classic tragedy are followed. Each act closes with a chorus. The murders, instead of taking place on the stage, are announced by messengers—a Greek device which constantly reappears in our early tragic drama. The acts are each preceded by a dumb-show, in which the contents of the act which is to follow are pantomimically set forth. This expedient, long made use of on our early stage, as is known to the readers of *Hamlet*, was not without its advantages. It prevented the spectator or reader from being absorbed in the interest of the incidents, and directed his observation to the manner of treatment rather than the mere matter treated. Yet it is not maintainable in a more developed condition of the drama; it belongs to the infancy of the art of construction, or, like the Euripidean Prologues, indicates a neglect of the essentially dramatic element in what is to follow. The fifth act of this play is to be regarded as an epilogue, and accordingly adds to the heaviness of the movement. Yet though the play moves without ease or variation, and though it is full of moral reflexions of excessive length, I cannot accept

[1] Craik, *History of English Literature, &c.*, i. 478.

Schlegel's criticism of it as utterly lifeless and spiritless, or regard it as either dull or feeble.

Gorboduc was acted on Jan. 18th, 1562, before Queen Elisabeth by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple; and in the following passage may doubtless be recognised an allusion to the suits of foreign princes for the hand of the Virgin Queen, one of which had in this very year been brought to an end by the Queen's own suggestion, while that of the powerful prince whose influence on English affairs was justly dreaded by the Protestant party had been previously staved off[1]:—

> 'For right will last, and wrong cannot endure;
> Right mean I his *or hers* upon whose name
> The people rest, by means of native line
> Or by the virtue of some former law
> Already made their title to advance.
> Such one, my lords, let be your chosen King,
> Such one so born within your native land,
> Such one prefer, and *in no wise admit*
> *The heavy yoke of foreign governaunce.*'

This tragedy is also remarkable as the first dramatic work in English written in blank verse. The experiment which Surrey had made in his translation of the Second and Fourth Books of the *Aeneid* (1557), and which he had borrowed from Italy[2], was thus early applied to the drama. Though, as will be seen, the credit of having introduced blank verse on the popular stage is due to Marlowe, who in his *Tamburlaine the Great* (printed 1590, acted perhaps two or three years earlier) endeavoured to wean the town from what he calls

> 'The jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,'

yet the original merit of employing it in the drama is due to the author, or authors, of *Gorboduc*. It was some time before the public reconciled itself to the metre; 'we know,' says Thomas Heywood in the Prologue to his *Royal King and Loyal Subject* (1600),

[1] I refer to Eric of Sweden and Philip of Spain. See Lingard, vol. vi. ch. i. Dudley's ambition was still directed to sharing Elisabeth's throne at this period, and Sackville belonged to the Protestant party. He was afterwards employed in the negotiations about the French marriage. See Fraude, vol. ix.

[2] Milton loftily ignored the effort of his predecessor.

'(And not long since) there was a time
Strong lines were not looked after, but *if rhyme*
Oh then 'twas excellent;'

but the result of experience, even after oscillations which it will be necessary to notice hereafter, has proved the judiciousness of Sackville's choice. I will not echo the rather flippant observation of Mrs. Elisabeth Montagu, in her *Essay on Shakespeare* (where, by the bye, she has some excellent observations on the advantages of blank verse as a dramatic metre), to the effect that the primary glory of French dramatists in their own eyes seems to be their triumph over the difficulties of rhyming; but it may be said, in a word, that the English dramatic metre proper has been one of the subsidiary causes of the manliness and strength which are among the distinguishing characteristics of the best period of our dramatic literature[1].

Gorboduc was first printed in 1565; but no authorised edition was put forth till 1571, when the play appeared under the name of *Ferrex and Porrex*.

Other early tragedies.

It seems going back, from a literary work of pretensions so advanced as those of *Gorboduc*, to note two dramatic efforts, contemporary or nearly so with it, which are in form still closely associated with a phase of the English drama on which the scholarly and courtly authors of the first English tragedy would doubtless have looked down with lofty scorn.

Yet I should be distinctly inclined to class both *Apius and Virginia* and *King Cambises* rather among our earliest tragedies than among our later moralities. Of the latter they indeed contain some of the essential elements; a considerable number of personified abstractions appear in both, and in none of our moralities is the character of the Vice more emphasised and vigorously developed than in both these dramas. But the interest which both excite is distinctly historical and real; and their leading characters are actual, and supposed historical, human beings. More-

[1] As to the introduction of blank verse, see Collier's *Introduction* to Thomas Heywood's play mentioned in the text, and edited by him for the *Shakespeare Society* (1850). Cf. *History of D. L.* iii. 107 *seqq.*

over, in *King Cambises* at least, it is not always easy to distinguish between abstract and concrete: 'Common Cry' *e. g.* may be regarded as a type or representative of the oppressed commons, and 'Execution,' though wearing the name of an abstraction, is actually summoned by the King as a concrete being, the 'execution man.'

The date of both these plays is probably very nearly contemporary with that of our earliest English tragedy proper; but from a literary point of view they may still be regarded as marking a transition rather than a consummated change. The *Tragical Comedy of Apius and Virginia*[1] is by an unknown author, or at least by one whose identity cannot be determined, designated under the initials R. B. It was probably acted as early as 1563, though it was not printed till 1575. The subject is one which has commended itself to various periods of our drama; from the beginnings of tragedy to Webster, and from Webster to Sheridan Knowles. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* is only a modern version of the same story. R. B.'s effort is of a very rude description, though it shows some sense of dramatic construction. The tragedy opens with an exhibition of the domestic bliss of Virginius and his wife and daughter, which they celebrate not only in dialogue, but in a song or refrain several times repeated:—

Apius and Virginia. (1563 circ.)

> 'The trustiest treasure in earth as wee see
> Is man, wife and children in one to agree;
> Then friendly and kindly let measure be mixed
> With reason in season, where friendship is fixed.'

The criminal lust of Apius therefore mars a fair picture of happiness with which the spectator has been led to sympathise, and the action progresses simply and effectively, the allegorical personages playing no important part in it. 'Haphazard,' the Vice, is a general mischief-maker, but is himself, as well as the Mansipulus and Mansipula with whom he holds converse, redundant to the action. At the close of the play, Doctrina, Memorie, and Virginius bring in a tome, wherein Memorie, Justice, Rewarde, and

[1] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. xii.

Fame inscribe the honour of Virginia's name[1]. The Epilogue prays 'God save the Queen,' but makes no reference to what a later poet would have joyed to find an occasion of celebrating, her renown for the virtue which is the subject of the play.

Preston's Cambises. (1561 ?)

Though the author of *Apius and Virginia* varies his tone as he varies his metres, a higher degree of literary merit seems to me to belong to the *Lamentable Tragedy conteyning the Life of Cambises King of Percia*—his one good deed, his many wicked deeds, and (I condense) his odious death. It is thought by some to have been written as early as 1561; and its author was a Cantab, Thomas Preston, who is said to have performed so well in the tragedy of *Dido* before Queen Elisabeth, that she, with a generosity not habitual to her, granted him an annual allowance of £20 in consequence. Her munificence was not ill-bestowed, for this tragedy or comedy (as it seems indifferently to call itself) is generally well written—chiefly in the so-called 'common metre'—and clearly constructed. King Cambises' one good deed is his condemnation to death of the wicked judge Sisamnes, who has misgoverned the realm during the King's absence in Egypt; among his evil deeds are his sentencing to death his too-outspoken counsellor Praxantes, after, according to the famous anecdote, shooting the minister's son in the heart to prove his own sobriety, his murder of his brother Semirdis, and his murder of his own consort, whom he has married in defiance of the divine law. The King falls by a divine Nemesis, as has been predicted by Ambidexter the Vice, who opines that the King was 'akin to Bishop Bonner.' The participation of this Vice in the action is ingeniously managed; but room is also found for much low fun and interchange of ribaldry between the Vice and three ruffians, Huf, Snuf, and Ruf[2], and two 'country patches,' Hob and Lob[3], who

[1] This is at least as effective as the introduction in Sheridan Knowles' play of an urn with the superscription *Virginia*, as containing her ashes.

[2] These names are introduced by Lyly into the Dedication of his *Pappe with an Hatchet.*

[3] There is some resemblance here to the scene in the *Winter's Tale* between the Peasants and Autolycus, who is a genuine descendant of the Vice.

speak the usual rustic dialect of the stage. On the other hand, some of the scenes (such as that between the condemned Sisamnes and his son, and that of the mother's lament over her murdered boy) display touches of real pathos; and though 'Cambyses' vein' has, in consequence of its being cited by Shakspere[1], become proverbial for rant, the language of the play is in no instance specially obnoxious to this charge.

The simplicity which must have still characterised the performance of these plays is illustrated by some of the stage-directions. 'Here let Virginius go about the scaffold'—so that the stage was still that of the mystery-dramas and moralities; and in *Cambises*, 'Smite him in the neck with a sword to signify death,' and 'Flea with him a false skin,' so that in this classical drama there was no attempt to practise the classical abstinence from the introduction of death on the stage. Though *Cambises* is full of characters, they are so arranged as to be capable of performance by seven men and a boy.

In subject, at all events, both these plays testify to the influence of classical literature upon the beginnings of English tragedy. The same is the case with a play acted before Queen Elisabeth at Whitehall by gentlemen of the Inner Temple less than a month after the performance of *Gorboduc*. But we know nothing of *Julyus Sesar*, except the date of its production (Feb. 1, 1562); and all speculation as to its relations to later plays on the same subject is futile[2].

Julyus Sesar (1562).

Between the years 1568 and 1580 a large variety of the plays represented at Court were on classical subjects; not less than eighteen of this description are enumerated by Mr. Collier, as against twenty-one on subjects from modern history or romance, seven comedies, and six morals[3]. The classical subjects are partly mythological, partly historical; among the latter is *Scipio Africanus*, which is possibly that enumerated by Peele among the most popular dramas of

Other tragedies on classical subjects (1568–1580).

[1] *Henry IV*, Part i. act ii. sc. 4.

[2] A French *César*, by Jacques Grévin, had appeared in 1560. The earliest French tragedy proper was Jodelle's *Cléopatre* (1552). Cf. (and for an account of early French tragedy generally) A. Ebert's *Entwicklungsgesch. d. franz. Tragödie.*

[3] Collier, iii. 24.

rather later date[1]. Stephen Gosson, who wrote in 1579 as an adversary of the stage, had himself been a dramatic author; and among the plays, 'tollerable at sometime,' which he excepts from his general censure, are one called *Ptolome*, and another which he terms a 'pig of his owne Sowe,' i. e. a piece written by himself, called *Catilins Conspiracies*[2]. Elsewhere he mentions *Caesar and Pompey*, and *The Fabii*, as subjects treated by contemporary dramatists. The nature of these plays we can only conjecture; Gascoigne's *Iocasta*, in the composition of which he was assisted by Kinwelmarsh and Yelverton, is a tolerably free adaptation of the *Phoenissae* of Euripides[3]. The choral odes in particular are in part original. It was acted at Gray's Inn in 1566, and is remarkable as the second English play written in blank verse. Dumb-shows introduce the acts[4].

Gascoigne's Iocasta (1566).

Tragi-comedies.

This enumeration shows how the choice of classical subjects and the imitation of classical models were exercising their influence upon the progress of English tragedy. It is not of course possible in all cases to be sure whether a play is to be strictly classed under the head of tragedy or of comedy; and, to judge from a play preserved from the hands of one of the most popular dramatists of his day, the species were at times so intermingled as to leave us at liberty to call plays by either name. Upon the whole, however, *Damon and Pithias* may be appropriately mentioned by the side of the plays enumerated above, though it would be more strictly classed as a *tragicomedy*, a species much cultivated in the Italian drama of the sixteenth century, and not without classical precedents. Though I have always thought that to treat the Messenger in the *Antigone* as a comic character is going too far, it is well known that the satyr-drama which the Attic stage appended to the tragic trilogy, contained a mixture of comic and tragic

[1] If the conjecture, 'Mahomet, Scipio' for 'Mahomet's Poo,' be correct. The passage is in Peele's *Farewell* (1589).

[2] *Schoole of Abuse*, p. 30 (*Shakesp. Soc.'s Publ.*, 1841).

[3] Ludovico Dolce's *Iocasta* ('già di Euripide invenzione et hora nuovo parto mio') was printed in 1549. Klein, v. 408.

[4] Collier, iii. 6–11; Warton, *Hist. of English Poetry*, sect. lvii.

elements, such as is presented to us in the *Alcestis* of Euripides. The Tarentines, too, possessed a dramatic species known as the *hilarotragedy*. Italian examples therefore doubtless influenced the cultivation of this species in England; to assume the influence of Spanish tragicomedy to have already largely co-operated, would probably be premature[1].

Richard Edwards (1523–1566).

Special favour appears to have been accorded by his contemporaries to the productions of the author of the play in question. Richard Edwards, of Corpus Christi College and Christ Church, Oxford, and Lincoln's Inn, and afterwards Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal (who performed one of his pieces before the Queen), was born in 1523, and died in 1566, the year in which his *Palamon and Arcyte* was acted before the Queen at Christ Church. On the evidence of the solitary play which has been preserved from his hand, he appears to have been much overpraised by his admirers, one of whom terms him

'the flower of our realm
And phoenix of our age.'

Damon and Pithias (pr. 1571).

Damon and Pithias[2] (printed 1571), which, though its main subject is tragic, calls itself a comedy, is one of the clumsiest of our early plays, both in action and in language, and above all in the management of the metre. Its lines are rhymed, but vary in length and neglect the *caesura*. If, as has been conjectured, the object of this attempt was to get rid of the monotony of rhymed lines[3], the result at all events was a complete failure. The 'comic business' (these stage phrases are at times so expressive as surely to be permissible) is of the nature of the broadest and stupidest farce; and the episode of the showing of the Collier Grimme (who is brought all the way from Croydon to the court of the Sicilian Dionysius, and 'singeth Busse' for the delectation of the lackeys there) is drawn out to

[1] As to Italian tragicomedy and its precedents, see Klein, iv. 590. The comic element in the Messenger in Sophocles' *Antigone* was insisted upon by the late Dr. Donaldson, who, in his admirable English translation of this tragedy, rendered the Messenger's speech in *prose*.

[2] See Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. i, and *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i.

[3] Collier, iii. 6.

a length enabling the reader to realise the interval of two months during which Damon is absent, his friend's life in peril, and the serious interest of the drama in suspense[1].

Plays on Italian subjects.

Classical history and mythology were, however, far from monopolising the attention of our early playwrights in search of dramatic subjects. Stories from modern history and romance were finding their way in large numbers to English readers; and it was particularly in translations of Italian novels that such subjects were becoming familiar to them[2]. The highly-seasoned tales of Boccaccio and other Italian writers were stimulating the curiosity, and, in the opinion of a sober scholar such as Ascham, something worse than the curiosity of Englishmen. Several of the Italian novelists of the age were doubtless also dramatists; and the example of Giraldi Cinthio, who founded more than one of his plays on a novel of his own[3], was not likely to remain without influence upon English playwrights. France, too, was introducing her light literary wares, partly original, partly translations, into the English market. The first English tragedy on a subject taken, directly or indirectly, from an Italian novel, was, there seems good reason to believe, a dramatic version of the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. In 1562, Arthur Brooke printed a metrical paraphrase of Bandello's history of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was itself preceded by Luigi da Porto's narrative of *La Giulietta*. As Brooke states that he had seen 'the same argument lately set forth on stage,' it is not unfairly concluded that a play on the subject had been already, *i.e.* before 1562, produced in England[4]. It seems more than probable that this play was based on an Italian drama, if indeed it was not an actual reproduction of it[5].

The first Romeo and Juliet (before 1562).

[1] The play is ridiculed in the 'motion' in *Bartholomew Fair*, act v. sc. 3.

[2] The first volume of Paynter's *Pallace of Pleasure* (sixty novels from Boccaccio) appeared in 1566; a translation of *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* in 1557. See, for further examples, Warton, *Hist. of English Poetry*, sect. lx.

[3] So the *Orbecche* (Klein, v. 324 *seqq.*); and again the *Epitia* (*ib.* 353).

[4] Collier, ii. 416. As to Arthur Brooke's paraphrase, see Warton, *u. s.*

[5] *viz.* Luigi Groto's *Hadriana*. See Klein, v. 420 *seqq.*; and cf. below as to the source of Shakspere's *Romeo and Juliet*.

A large proportion of the plays which we may presume to have been tragical in their main subject was doubtless likewise derived from Italian sources. The first play of this description which is preserved to us illustrates, by the circumstances of its production, the favour which this class of subjects enjoyed.

Tancred and Gismunda (first acted 1568).

The tragedy of *Tancred and Gismunda*[1] is remarkable as the oldest English play extant the plot of which is known to be taken from an Italian novel[2], a class of works which was afterwards to prove so prolific a source of subjects for Shakspere and his fellow-dramatists. And yet it in so far connects itself with *Gorboduc*, that the authors of this tragedy endeavoured to follow ancient models, every act commencing with a dumb-show and terminating with choruses. It was originally written in rhyme, by five gentlemen, probably members of the Inner Temple, where it was acted in 1568 before Queen Elisabeth and her 'right Honourable Maidens,' to whom the 'Preface' was subsequently addressed; but being republished in 1572 by Robert Wilmot, the author of the last act, was 'polished according to the decorum of these days,' *i.e.* put into blank verse.

The subject of this tragedy belongs to the most extravagant kind of romance. King Tancred, after surprising his daughter Gismunda with her lover, causes him to be put to death, and his heart, placed in a golden cup, to be presented to his daughter[3]. She fills the cup with poison, and drinks her death from it; and her dying wish to be reunited to her lover in the tomb is carried out by the broken-hearted father, who slays himself with his own hands.

The most noteworthy feature of this play is doubtless

[1] Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. ii.

[2] Collier, iii. 13. The story is taken from Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, Day iv, Nov. 1. According to Klein, *Gesch. des Dramas*, v. 461–2, there were several early Italian plays on the subject. Silvano de' Razzi's *Gismonda* was printed in 1569. Pomponio Torelli (d. 1608) wrote a tragedy on the subject, and Federico Asinari another (printed 1588). The latter appeared in Paris in 1587, under the title *Gismonda*, as a work by Torquato Tasso.

[3] Readers of Keats will not forget the *Pot of Basil* as a parallel to the situation of act v. sc. 2.

the struggle which it exhibits between the classical tastes of its authors and the romantic character of their subject. Through the first four acts everything proceeds classically enough; Cupid speaks as Prologue; choruses of maidens intersperse reflexive lyrics and calmly intervene in the action, the real incidents of which are carefully kept behind the scene. But, in the last act, though the death and doom of the 'Countie' has been decently narrated by an eye-witness, the situation becomes too strong for the classicism of the writer, and Gismunda and her father both die on the stage. The speeches of this play are of inordinate length, though *stichomythia* in the Greek antithetical manner is also introduced. The lyrical passages strike me as graceful; and, altogether, I should say that the play has no mean literary merit. The inevitable compliment to Queen Elisabeth here occurs, not at the end, but in the middle of the piece [1].

G. Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra (pr. 1578).

A more enduring interest attaches, in the history of our dramatic literature, to the next play founded on a subject from Italian story. George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* [2], from which Shakspere took the story of his *Measure for Measure*, was printed in 1578; and its subject is a novel of Giraldi Cinthio's, which Whetstone himself translated in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582). Cinthio himself dramatised the story in a work of earlier date [3]. The author of this play, in his Dedication, exhibits a very critical spirit, and for various reasons condemns the dramatic tastes of the principal literary nations of Europe, his own among the number [4]. But though he takes lofty

[1] Act ii. *ad fin.*:—

'Yet let not us maidens condemn our kind,
Because our virtues are not all so rare:
For we may freshly yet recall in mind,
There lives a virgin, one without compare,
Who of all graces hath her heavenly share;
In whose renown, and for whose happy days,
Let us record this Paean of her praise.'

[2] Printed in vol. i. of the *Six Old Plays on which Sh. founded his Measure for Measure, &c.* (published by Nichols in 1779).

[3] *Epitia*; cf. Klein, v. 353 *seqq.* Cinthio died 1573.

[4] The passage is worth quoting:—'At this daye, the Italian is so lascivious

ground with reference to both diction and construction, it cannot be said that he was in practice highly successful in either respect. Consideration of '*Decorum*' preventing him from 'convaying' his whole story in a single play of five acts, he has distributed it over two—but very unequally as to the serious interest of the argument, which is wholly absorbed by the first part. And to 'work kindly' the action of his characters, he has made his low comedy very low, and his grosser characters very gross. The moral struggle in his heroine is brought to a conclusion too rapidly to keep the reader or spectator in an effective condition of suspense; while the intrigues of a courtesan and the ribaldries of a pimp relieve after their fashion the cumbrous progress of an in itself offensive plot. It was something different from mere condensation which converted *Promos and Cassandra* into *Measure for Measure*.

Plays on subjects from national history.

From the double danger which threatened the English tragic drama in the days of its infancy—that it might seek to dwell on the glacial heights of classical subjects or dissolve its vigour in the glowing heat of Italian narratives of passion—it was freed, more than by any other cause, by the fact of its associating itself with the traditions of national history. The direction in which a sound instinct had turned the controversial ardour of Bishop Bale was that in which English tragedy was not indeed to find a sphere sufficiently wide to absorb its energies, but to

in his Commedies, that honest hearers are greeved at his actions: the *Frenchman* and *Spaniarde* folows the *Italians* humor: the *Germaine* is too holye; for he presents on every common Stage what Preachers should pronounce in Pulpets. The *Englishman*, in this qualitie, is most vaine, indiscrete, and out of order: he first groundes his worke on impossibilities: then in three howers ronnes he throwe the world: marryes, gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdomes, murder monsters, and bringeth Gods from Heaven, and fetcheth divels from Hel.' But the gravest objection to English playwrights is, that they do not make the speech of each character appropriate to it, but use one order of speech for all kinds of persons. The objection to the *Germaine* is the same as that brought against English plays by Northbrooke in his nearly contemporary *Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Plays and Interludes* (1577 *circ.*). See *Shakesp. Soc.'s Publ.*, 1843, p. 92.—Whetstone's life was a very unfortunate and adventurous one; he took part in an unsuccessful expedition to Newfoundland; and it has even been thought possible (from a passage in *Bartholomew Fair*, act i. sc. 1) that he ended in Bedlam.

[illegible]

[illegible] "Master Francis Bacon," who was at that time already a member of Gray's Inn.

[illegible] Francis [illegible]

[illegible]

and had sat in Parliament[1]. Bacon, as is proved by his essay *On Masques and Triumphs*, had considerable insight into the principles of dramatic effect, although at the close of this essay he loftily dismisses its subjects as 'toys.'

The circumstance of Bacon's co-operation, however slight it may have been, in this piece, would alone attach a special interest to it; but it deserves notice on its own account. Its subject is taken from that *Morte d'Arthur* which 'in our forefathers' time' had, according to Ascham[2], formed the staple literary entertainment of the English court. The Arthurian legend had derived a new interest from the Welsh origin of the founder of the Tudor dynasty, who bore the dragon on his flag when he started on his march from Milford Haven, and who gave to his eldest son the name of the Briton Prince. Though the Arthurian cycle of legend furnished the subject of more than one Elisabethan drama[3], yet it proved impossible both then and afterwards to galvanise into a national subject the unreal figures of this misty and migratory body of romance. Thomas Hughes, the author of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, was doubtless attracted to his subject by its resemblance to the classical myths which were at that time so much in the hands of learned students. He viewed the story of Arthur's fall as the wreaking of a curse due in its origin to Arthur's sin; and the Ghost of Gorlois, whom in life Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father, so cruelly wronged, opens the play as the *Umbra Tantali* opens the *Thyestes* of Seneca[4]. The terrible complication of adultery and incest which avenges itself on Arthur and his son Mordred, resembles that of the most awful classical tragedies; nor is the solemn dignity of this drama unequal to its arduous theme. The expectation, in the first act, of Arthur's return

[1] Parliament had been dissolved about a year before the production of this play. See Spedding's *Life of Bacon*, *Works*, viii. 67.

[2] *Scholemaster*, book i. The passage is well known; cf. the striking sarcasm in Ben Jonson's *New Inn*, act i. sc. 1. Ben Jonson himself effectively uses the Arthurian legend in the *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*.

[3] See below as to *The Birth of Merlin*, attributed to Shakspere.

[4] The *Ombra di Selina* in Cinthio's *Orbecche* (Klein, v. 326) has the same origin, but no similar moral claim to assume the position.

by the guilty Guenevora recalls the opening situation of the *Agamemnon*, and the speech of the *Nuntius*, in the first scene of the second act, seems to have been suggested by a similar speech in the same Æschylean tragedy. In general, the rules of the classical drama are here carefully observed as in *Gorboduc*, with which tragedy the *Misfortunes of Arthur* connects itself in manner of treatment, as to some degree it does in subject. In style the later is at least equal to the earlier play; the *stichomythia* is managed with considerable force and effect; and there is no lack of vigour in some of the speeches. Thus *e.g.* the address of Arthur to his soldiers (act iii. sc. 3), in which he bids defiance to his rebel son—

> 'Nay, let that Princocke come,
> That knowes not yet himselfe, nor Arthur's force;
> That n'er yet waged warres; that's yet to learne
> To give the charge: yea, let that Princocke come,
> With sodaine souldiers pamper'd up in peace,
> And gowned troupes and wantons worne with ease;
> With sluggish Saxons crewe, and Irish kernes
> And Scottish aide, and false redshanked Picts'—

is extremely spirited, and contrasts powerfully with the subdued melancholy of the King's previous speeches. The last stanza of the chorus to act iii ('O base yet happy boores!' &c.) will recall a familiar Shaksperian passage; and the mysterious disappearance of Arthur in death ends the action with peculiar effectiveness:—

> 'This onely now I crave (O fortune, erst
> My faithfull friend) let it be soone forgot,
> Nor long in minde, nor mouth, where Arthur fell:
> Yea, though I conqueror die, and full of fame,
> Yet let my death and parture rest obscure.
> No grave I neede (O fates) nor buriall rights
> Nor stately hearce, nor tombe with haughty toppe;
> But let my carcasse lurke; yea, let my death
> Be ay unknowen, so that in every coast
> I still be feard, and lookt for every houre.
> [*Exeunt.*'

But Arthurian legend is not, and never has been, to the English national mind what the myths which supplied the subjects of Attic tragedy were to the Greek. British legend in general has no relation to the historic consciousness of

our people; and the Arthurian cycle in particular only came back to our shores after being imbued with the romantic elements of a foreign literary atmosphere. Thus the praiseworthy, and, within its limits, successful attempt of Thomas Hughes had the radical weakness of an artificial origin; and belongs to a passing early phase in the history of English tragedy, instead of connecting itself with the real national life to which the tragic drama was already attaining.

Chronicle Histories.

The dates of our earliest tragedies on subjects from national history properly so called are uncertain; but of two old plays which are to be distinctly classed as *Chronicle Histories*, while in subject they connect themselves with the established glories of our English historical drama, the one was beyond doubt acted before 1588, and the other was printed in 1591. The former of these[1] is *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth.* Written partly in prose, and partly in blank verse frequently of a very rude description[2], it is neither divided into acts and scenes, nor otherwise constructed with the slightest degree of dramatic skill. But its vigour and freshness are considerable; and in many of its scenes and characters we recognise the familiar situations and favourite figures of Shakspere's *Henry IV* and *Henry V.* For it commences with the end of Henry IV's reign, and introduces not only the wild doings of Prince Hal and his merry companions, among whom Sir John Oldcastle makes a passing appearance, but also the interview between the Prince and his dying father, and the premature seizure of the crown by the former. Then follow, in a rapid succession of scenes, the victorious campaign of the young King up to Agincourt, and his marriage with the Princess Katherine—the scene between whom and Henry contains many of the best points of that in Shakspere, without being disfigured like the latter by an unpardonable element of grossness to the address of the

The Famous Victories of Henry V (acted before 1588).

[1] Both are printed in the *Six Old Plays* (v. *ante*).

[2] *e.g.* King Henry's not very perspicuous computation of the French and English forces before Agincourt:—

'They threescore thousand, And we twelve thousand.
And we but two thousand, They are a hundred thousand
They threescore thousand footmen And we forty thousand, ten to one.'

groundlings. A personage called Dericke is the clown of the piece.

The Troublesome Raigne of King John (pr. 1591).

The second of these Chronicle Histories is *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, in two parts. Like the *Famous Victories*, it is partly in prose, partly in verse—the latter being frequently rhymed. It is not divided into acts, and the scenes follow one another without any attempt at dramatic construction. Nor is there, except perhaps in the case of the Bastard Faulconbridge, any endeavour to develope character out of the situations. The facts, or supposed facts, of history are allowed to speak for themselves; and it is most instructive to compare this faithful reproduction on the stage of an epically consecutive narrative with Bale's didactic effort on the one hand, and Shakspere's compact drama on the other. It is in such a play as the *Troublesome Raigne* that we have the best example of the *Chronicle History* pure and simple. Its author, at one time carelessly thought to be Shakspere himself[1], is at the same time fully alive to the political lessons—such as he conceives them to be—of his subject, so far as it relates to the struggle with Rome[2]. But his facts are upon the whole drily given; only here and there a fine passage, and more frequently a Latin phrase[3], varies the

[1] In deference to Pope's 'hasty and inconsiderate opinion.' See Malone's *Shaksp.*, vol. xviii. p. 593.

[2] 'Tell thy master so from me,' says the King to Cardinal Pandulph, in Part I, 'and say, *John* of *England* said it, that never an Italian priest of them all, shal either have tythe, tole, or poling peny out of *England*; but as I am king, so will I raigne next under God, supreame head both over spiritual and temporall; and he that contradicts me in this, Ile make him hop headlesse.' And again, Part II:—

> 'If my dying heart deceive me not,
> From out these loynes shall spring a kingly braunch
> Whose arms shall reach unto the gates of *Rome*,
> And with his feete treades downe the strumpet's pride
> That sits upon the chaire of *Babylon*.'

[3] *e.g.* '*Essex.* *Philip* speake I say, who was thy father?
John. Young man how now, what art thou in a trance?
Elianor. *Philip* awake, the man is in a dreame.
Philip. *Philippus atavis aedite Regibus.* [*sic.*]
What saist thou *Philip*, sprung of auncient kings?
Quo me rapit tempestas?
What winde of honour blowes this furie forth?' &c.

progress of the dialogue. The incidents are the same as in Shakspere; but the old play introduces, with a considerable amount of comic ribaldry, an incident omitted by Shakspere, the plunder of a Franciscan abbey by Faulconbridge.

Other Chronicle Histories.

These *Chronicle Histories* cannot have stood alone; when the vein had once been opened, it was doubtless at once worked energetically by competing playwrights. There is evidence of an old historical play upon the life and death of *Henry I;* and at the distance of only a few years we shall meet with plays on the subject of the fall of *Richard III* and the *Contention* between the houses of York and Lancaster, which connect themselves so closely with a work of one at least of Shakspere's immediate predecessors, and with works of Shakspere himself, that they will find more appropriate notice in subsequent chapters.

The True Chronicle History of King Leir (acted 1593).

In conclusion, two other plays may be noticed as falling under the head of historical tragedy. The *True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*[1], was acted in 1593, and in its form is of the same kind as the Chronicle Histories founded on English history already mentioned. Its resemblance to Shakspere's tragedy is not more striking than its difference from it. For not only is the powerful bye-plot of Gloucester and his sons absent from the Chronicle History, but the latter is far from developing the dramatic capabilities of its subject in a fashion corresponding to that of the Shaksperean tragedy. The influence of Lear's experiences upon his mind, and the growth in it of that madness the depiction of which constitutes the climax of terror and pity in Shakspere, is not followed out; nor is the King accompanied in his wanderings, as in Shakspere, by those strangely contrasted companions, Edmund and the Fool. Of the character of Kent, however, the germ is perceptible in *Perillus*. While the ingratitude of Goneril and Regan is far less skilfully exhibited—not by cumulating instances, as in Shakspere—the uninteresting episode of the wooing of Cordelia by the King of France, who with his com-

[1] Printed in the *Six Old Plays, &c.*, vol. ii.

panion Lord 'Mumford' meets her in disguise, is long drawn out. Yet with all its defects, the play seems only to await the touch of a powerful hand to be converted into a tragedy of supreme effectiveness; and while Shakspere's genius nowhere exerted itself with more transcendent force and marvellous versatility, it nowhere found more promising materials ready to its command.

Sir Thomas More (1590 *circ.*).

I have already had occasion to advert incidentally to the tragedy of *Sir Thomas More*[1], as containing, by way of a play within the play, one of our moralities. Its chief interest, however, lies in the circumstance that it should have been possible, at so early a date as 1590 or thereabouts, to treat in a dramatic form historical events connected so closely with one of the most critical passages in the policy of King Henry VIII. The anonymous author of the play has in a manner overcome the dangerous difficulty of his task by treating More's fall as a kind of heaven-sent calamity, which arouses sympathy and pity rather than calls for judgment on the actions and motives of its author. The contents of the 'articles' to which More and the Bishop of Rochester decline to subscribe are left unmentioned. The play thus, though in general following Hall's *Chronicle*, is a character-tragedy rather than a historic drama. Its hero is first exhibited as the wise judge, the energetic politician, and the renowned scholar. He deals out equity at the expense of a Justice of the Peace; he suppresses a dangerous insurrection; and holds sportful converse with 'the famous clarke of Rotherdam' Erasmus;—and then (after the moral-play has been exhibited) sits in high council of State. It is here that he declines to submit to the King's demand; after which we are introduced to the house at 'Chelsey,' and that domestic circle which Holbein has rendered so familiar to us. More's cheerful and philosophical bearing is very effectively depicted; and we then accompany him to the Tower and to the scaffold, from the stairs of which he delivers himself of his well-known dying words. 'A very learned worthie gentleman seales errour with his blood,'

[1] Edited for the *Shakespeare Society* (1844) by the late Mr. Dyce.

says the personage whose speech concludes the play. Containing a considerable admixture of humorous passages, it is altogether a pleasing and vigorous dramatic sketch of the serene and generous character to which it is designed to do honour. Though, as it seems to me, offence was carefully avoided in the construction of this play, the fact of its production is not wholly without historical significance. But a great time invariably brings with it a sense of freedom with regard to the past—however comparatively unremote—which it casts into the shade by its own greatness. Our literature in the last two decades of the sixteenth century exhibits many instances of this emancipation; and a stage which could appeal to public sympathy with a victim of the legislation of Henry VIII was before long to venture with a certain degree of freedom on references to Elisabeth's own reign. The days of absolute prohibitions against subjecting matters of government to the light of either literary or dramatic publicity had passed away, at least for a time, with the little age which had produced them.

Comedy.

The birth of Comedy, as has already been indicated, slightly precedes that of Tragedy in the history of the English drama. In the case of the former, the bridge leading from the moralities was so closely marked out by certain features in the moralities themselves, that it could not fail sooner or later to be taken advantage of. The process of developement was neither absolutely the same nor contemporaneous in the dramatic literatures of France, Italy, Germany, and our own country. Something has already been said of the early, and from the first, vigorous growth of the French *sotties*, which existed by the side of the moralities as well as frequently intermingled with them. In the earliest therefore, as well as in the later phases of its history, the French comic stage was in advance of that of other nations. In Germany, too, it was the religious plays proper which produced the comic outgrowth of the *Fastnachtsspiele* (Shrove-Tuesday plays), the earliest known specimens of which belong to the middle of the fifteenth century. These appear to have been little more than

Its first growths in France;

Germany;

comic dialogues; and though these germs of comedy were cherished by the unflagging industry of Hans Sachs, they were not destined to produce a vital growth; the decay of national feeling prevented the rise of a national comic

Italy; drama—indeed of any national drama at all[1]. In Italy, the earliest efforts in the direction of comedy were of a similar description. The *contrasti*, of which many titles are preserved from the close of the fifteenth and from the sixteenth century[2], were disputations or contentions, inevitably containing a considerable comic element, between abstract or allegorical figures. The *frottola* (literally a comic ditty) marks a step in advance. Here types take the place of abstractions, and more characters than two are introduced; we are, however, still among dramatised dialogues rather than in view of dramatic action. The Roman *carri* (comic disputations held on waggons during the Carnival) must have been of a similar class. But their origin is of course to be sought, not in a developement of the religious drama or the morality, but in that popular growth of immemorial antiquity whose origin belongs to the days of the ancient Italian world. The term *farsa* is indeed applied indiscriminately to serious religious as well as to profane comic plays; but it was the latter which attained to a peculiarly vigorous and national growth, as connecting themselves with the *atellanes* and *mimes* of ancient Italy. In the hands of the famous Neapolitan court-poet Giacopo Sannazaro (who flourished at the close of the fifteenth century) the court-*farsa* received a new literary as well as social significance.

[1] Vilmar, *Gesch. der deutschen Nationalliteratur*, i. 335. The two chief writers of *Fastnachtsspiele* in the fifteenth century were Hans Rosenblüt and Hans Folz, both of Nürnberg (the latter was born at Worms). A useful edition of Hans Sachs' plays, with an Introduction, is that by J. Tittmann in K. Gödeke and J. T.'s *Deutsche Dichter des 16. Jahrh.*, vol. vi. (1871).

[2] The following titles will sufficiently illustrate the nature of the *contrasti*: *el contrasto di carnesciale et la quaresima* (Carnival and Fasting); *el c. degli huomini e dell donne* (men and women); *il c. del vivo et del morto*; *c. del Denaro e dell' Uomo* (money and man); *contenzione della Povertà contra la Richezza*; *el contrasto de l'Aqua et del Vino*; and of the *Frottole*: *la Contentione di Mona Gostanza* (Dame G.) *et di Biagio*; *frottola d'un padre che haveva dua figlinoli* (one good and one bad); *f. da dua vecchi fattori di monache*. Cf. Klein, iv. 233–6. As to the *carri*, see *ib.* 239.

Italian attempts probably belonging to the fifteenth century which already call themselves *commedie* were doubtless still merely vivacious dialogues[1]. But with the existence of the above-named elements, it only needed the impulse of example to produce a national growth of Italian comedy. The schools came to the aid of life; and the influence of the studies of the Renascence called forth fruits from the expectant soil. In the fourteenth, as well as in the fifteenth century, Latin comedies were written by Italian writers, but little remains of these except the names, among them that of the *Philologia* by Petrarch. And in the latter part of the fifteenth century, Latin classical comedies were acted not only in the original but in Italian translations. Pomponio Leto, who is said to have revived the stage at Rome, caused the comedies of Plautus and Terence to be acted on the Quirinal and in the courtyards of the great prelates' palaces; and Hercules I, duke of Ferrara, had Italian translations from the same writers performed at Ferrara[2].

The first original Italian comedy (for Nardi's *Amicizia* was not written till the year of Bojardo's death) is Bojardo's *Timone*, produced before the year 1494. Its subject is significant, as exhibiting not only the influence of classical literature, but also the step from dialogue to dramatic action. This comedy is founded on the dialogue of Lucian (who accordingly speaks the prologue, while the philosopher Boëthius similarly introduces the last act), and may be described as a mythological comedy, introducing abstract figures, such as Wealth, Poverty, Wisdom[3]. And within a generation the first great writer of modern comedy was busily at work; and with the plays of Ariosto, composed in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Italian

[1] So the *Commedia di due Contadini* (two peasants) and the *C. d'un Villono e di una Zingara*. Klein, iv. 243. *Zingaresche* or Gypsy-dialogues were a standing species of dialogues. The Roman *Carri* were sometimes called *Giudati*, because they so systematically victimised the Jews. *Ib.* 239.

[2] *I Menecmi* 1486, *Anfitrione* 1487. He also caused the *Casina* and the *Mostellaria* to be translated into Italian *terza rima*. Pomponio Leto produced the *Asinaria* and other Roman comedies, apparently in Latin, about the same time. Klein, iv. 250–1, 248.

[3] Klein, iv. 254–273.

comedy had established for itself an independent literary existence. Though some of Ariosto's plays are adaptations of Latin classical comedies, yet they are to be regarded in form and treatment as essentially original works.

It would be to anticipate, were I to dwell at once on the influence exercised by Italian upon the growth of English comedy. This will be illustrated, as we proceed, by individual examples; but it may perhaps be worth while to note, that though both Ariosto and Aretino wrote comedies which may be described as comedies of character, it was the comedy of intrigue or adventure, in which character and manners are rather incidentally painted than made the primary subject of treatment, which attained to an early and full developement in Italy, and by its example fostered the luxuriant growth of our own romantic comedy.

The Commedia dell' Arte.

The peculiar Italian species of the so-called *Commedia dell' Arte* received its name from the fact that it was always performed by professional actors—trained members of a *craft*. Its scenes, of which the scheme was drawn out beforehand, were, as to dialogue, filled up by improvisation, —its dialogue was, in the language of modern actors, all 'gag.' But this species of comedy, of ancient national origin, remained peculiar to the country of its birth[1]. The scenes of the *Commedia dell' Arte* were connected together by the *lazzi* (*lit.* ligatures or links) of the *Arlecchino*. This was one of the standing figures of the *masked comedy* of the Italians, which was not improvised like the other, but distinguished by its action being carried on by certain typical figures in masks, and its speech being in local dialects[2]. It was cherished with special predilection by the Italians,

[1] Though of course the origin of the *C. dell' Arte* is to be traced to the ancient *atellanes and mimes*, its invention under its modern form and name was ascribed to Pope Leo X's favourite player, Francesco (called Terenziano) Cherea.

[2] Its invention was due to Angelo Beolco, who called himself *Ruzante* (joker), of Padua (born 1502). Its figures represented *local* types (*Pantalone* the Venetian merchant, the *Dottore* the Bolognese doctor, &c.), and spoke each a local dialect. The *Arlecchino* and others of these standing figures are of course of ancient origin, and the characters in part correspond to the standing figures of regular Latin and Italian comedy. They underwent various modifications, which it is unnecessary here to pursue. See Klein, iv. 902 *seqq.*

and was, as will be seen, not wholly without its influence upon the formation of some of the familiar figures of English comedy.

The Italian pastoral drama.

Lastly, it may be noted that the pastoral drama, which was, in other words, the bucolic idyll in a dramatic form, and freely lent itself to the introduction of both mythological and allegorical elements, flourished in Italy from the close of the fifteenth century. Its origin was purely literary. The renowned scholar Agnolo Poliziano's *Orfeo* (1472) begins the series, of which Tasso's *Aminta* (1573) and Guarini's *Pastor Fido* (1583, first printed 1590) represent the flower[1]. Its artificial character, enabling it to be the vehicle at once of classical learning, imaginative expansiveness, and compliment veiled under transparent allegory, commended it for imitation to our Elisabethan poets; and its influence will be perceptible at almost every stage of the progress of our drama, more particularly in its comic branches.

Beginnings of Comedy in Spain.

The beginnings of Spanish comedy in the main followed the same process as those of Italian. The first *entremeses*, *i.e.* interludes, connect themselves directly with the mysteries and moralities in which it had been at an early date usual to insert them; in the *Couplets of Mingo Revulgo* (1472) we have a dialogue in character after the fashion of the Italian *contrasti*. The personages are Mingo Revulgo (*i.e.* Domingo Vulgus), who represents the common people, and Gil Arribato (the Elevated), who represents the higher classes. 'A Dialogue between Love and an Old Man,' of the same period, is of the same description. Towards the end of the fifteenth century was composed—not for representation, as is shown by the fact that it comprised twenty-one acts—the tragicomedy of *Calisto and Meliboea*, a pure dramatic story of intrigue and character, which afterwards became famous under the name of *Celes-*

[1] For a characterisation of the *Orfeo* see J. Mähly, *Angelus Politianus* (1864), pp. 108–143. This work, which the Italians are said to regard as the beginning of their opera, was despised by its author, who wished it to be treated as weakling children were treated by their Spartan parents. To the *Pastor Fido* I shall have occasion to return.

tina. It was begun about 1480 by Rodrigo Cota, and finished by 1499 by Fernando de Rojas. Its great success caused it to be frequently translated, and thus it became known to an early English play-writer. It gave rise to many imitations, and in 1582 was adapted for the stage by Celpeda. Meanwhile the Spanish drama had pursued the course of its growth; the first dramatic compositions performed in Spain by actors who were neither priests nor cavaliers were the *Representaciones* of Juan de la Cazina (born 1468–9), which, under the name of 'Eclogues,' were dramatic dialogues, partly of a religious, partly of a pastoral character. Both in Spain and in Portugal these entertainments developed slowly in the direction of the regular drama, under the influence of Italian and, occasionally, of Classical examples; but a national drama had not formed itself in Spain before it was already rising in England. The early Spanish theatre is chiefly remarkable for its mixture of styles; and the first great Spanish dramatists, Cervantes and Lope de Vega, are extremely uncertain in form[1].

Beginnings of English comedy.

These general hints will suffice to indicate the contemporary influences to which the beginnings of comedy in England were more or less subject. I return once more to the English stage, at the period in which the germs of comedy were still slumbering beneath the cumbrous folds of the moralities.

Transition from the moralities.

What was in the first instance required was, that some writer should be bold enough to throw overboard the time-honoured machinery of personified abstractions which the moralities had preserved with so marvellous a persistency; and to elevate into sole agents of plays pursuing the same ends as the moralities themselves, those personal types which had hitherto been only occasionally introduced. But though a step is easy to be taken, the resolute freedom characteristic of genius will often alone be found ready to

[1] Cf. Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, Period I, chaps. xiii and xiv; Period II, chaps. vii and viii. A translation of Acts xix and xx of the *Celestina* (with the catastrophe of the ladder) will be found in M. A. Fée's *Études sur l'ancien théatre Espagnol* (1873), p. 417 *seqq*.

take it. English literature furnished examples of interlocutory poems, which needed only the element of action to constitute them small dramas; while the moralities had proved the facility with which a dramatic fable may be constructed out of a contrast of characters. To find in the exposition of such a contrast, represented by means of living human types, materials for a dramatic action, was to take the requisite step in advance. This was accomplished by an author whom I do not scruple to call a man of genius, the author of our first *Interludes* in the more restricted sense of the term. Interludes.

JOHN HEYWOOD, born in the city of London, and educated at Oxford, was recommended, probably through his acquaintance Sir Thomas More (a kindred spirit, though of a loftier kind), to the notice of Henry VIII. He enjoyed the favour of Henry VIII, and more especially of his daughter Mary, both as princess and afterwards as queen. Under Edward VI[1] he escaped persecution only as a matter of favour; and on Elisabeth's accession he left his native country, and died at Malines in 1565. Besides his plays, he wrote Epigrams and other poetical pieces—one of them a poem in praise of his kindest and most constant patroness, written at a time when she was under a cloud of disgrace[2]; another a nuptial ballad on her marriage with Philip of Spain; a third a *Ballad of the Green Willow*, with the same burden as Desdemona's[3]. John Heywood (d. 1565).

[1] He is said (by Harington, quoted by Dodsley and Fairholt) to have escaped 'the jerke of the six-string'd whip.' I cannot see how this can refer to Edward VI's time; for the Statute of the Six Articles was repealed in 1547. Yet why should the orthodox Heywood have incurred any penalties under this Statute?

[2] There is a touch of nature, as compared with the flatteries addressed to Elisabeth in her mature years, in the following lines addressed to her sister at the age of eighteen:—

'If all the worlde were sought full farre,
Who could finde such a wyght?
Her beutye twinkleth like a starre,
Within the frostye night.

Her couler comes and goes,
With such a goodly grace,
More ruddye than the rose,
Within her lively face.'

[3] Printed in the *Shakesp. Soc. Papers*, vol. i. pp. 44–46 (*Publ.* 1844).

It is, however, only with his dramatic productions that we are concerned. These alone would suffice to show at once the nature of the opinions, and the character of the man. His humour is of a kind perhaps peculiarly characteristic of those minds which combine with a strong conservative bottom a hatred of shams and a great love of personal license in the expression of opinion. Such a mind was that of Aristophanes, who, I am convinced, went through no such changes of beliefs as have been attributed to him by the analysing ingenuity of a modern commentator[1], but always reserved to himself that freedom of expression which is quite compatible with fixed principles in religion or in politics. Such a mind was that of Canning, who under the influence of personal feeling could satirise a Tory premier as happily as he could a Radical revolutionist. Heywood was an orthodox Roman Catholic, and to quarrel with the foundations of ecclesiastical authority (such as they seemed to him) was in his eyes foolishness; but he saw no reason to spare priests, pardoners, or pilgrims the lash of his joyous wit.

For both the wit and the humour of Heywood are not only undeniable, but exceedingly striking, especially in the midst of the, upon the whole, tedious literature of our English moralities. The manifestation of these qualities by Heywood redeems the youthful period of the English comic drama from the charge of utter inferiority to that of the French; and proves that neither had Chaucer written in vain, nor were Shakspere and Ben Jonson in this respect without a true predecessor. If the form of Heywood's interludes is extremely simple, this only increases our admiration for the fact that he found it possible in so limited an area to display comic faculties which would have been equal to far ampler opportunities. He tells a merry tale with Chaucerian *verve;* and contrives in his simple scenes to introduce touches of character of irresistible effectiveness. And, so far as it is possible to judge, his fondness for a joke is merely the ripple on a

[1] C. Kock, *Aristophanes u. die Götter des Volksglaubens.*

broad surface of good sense which, as is invariably the case, is at one with the broad principles of a healthy morality.

The Mery Play between Johan Johan and Husbonde, &c. (pr. 1533).

The *Mery Play between Johan Johan the Husbonde, Tyb his Wyfe and Syr Jhon the Preest*[1] (printed 1533), contains no characters beyond those named in its title, and its plot is simplicity itself. Johan Johan commences the action by a soliloquy, in which, because it *is* a soliloquy, he announces with heroic boldness his determination to exercise his marital authority by 'beting' his wife. He reviews and overthrows the possible arguments against such a proceeding; but the real argument soon appears in the shape of his wife Tyb herself. She meets her husband's suspicions as to her relations with the parish priest by obliging him to ask her ghostly friend to partake of a 'pye,' which constitutes the central point of interest in the drama. The notion that to suffer injury is much, but that to be deprived of one's dinner by the destroyer of one's peace is *too* much, is immortal in farce; but never has it been worked out with more robust humour than in this *Mery Play*. While the priest and Tyb are making an end of the pie, Johan Johan is obliged to 'chafe wax' at the fire, in order to stop up a hole in a pail, which, there is too much reason to believe, was not strange in its origin to Tyb[2]. In the end, the suffering husband's patience gives way, and he attacks the priest 'with his fyst,' ending the play with forebodings that his wife has found means of consoling Syr Jhon to which it behoves her husband at once to put a stop.

The Four P's (1540 *circ.*).

It will be seen that Heywood's orthodoxy by no means rendered him blind to clerical irregularities. *The Four P's*[3] (printed between the years 1543 and 1547, but probably written about 1540) is a production extremely

[1] Reprinted at the Chiswick Press, from the unique copy in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1819). 'Sir' is the title commonly given to a priest.

[2] Cf. in the *Farce de Pernet* (*Ancien Théatre Français*, i. 211):

'C'est ung très poure passetemps
De chauffer la cire quant on digne.'

[3] Printed in Dodsley's *Select Old Plays*, vol. i; and in the *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i.

entertaining in its details, and thoroughly successful in discriminating between the moral which it teaches and the tendency which it might be misinterpreted to possess. It is therefore greatly to be regretted that its most humorous passages are unfit to be read to modern ears. The four P's are the Palmer and the Pardoner, who begin by a contest as to the superior efficacy of the processes of salvation which they respectively practise, the 'Poticary, who asserts that if they teach men how to prepare for death, he can facilitate death itself, and the Pedler. The task of the last-named is to judge which is the greatest liar of the three; and the competition consists in the telling of two stories by the Palmer and the Pardoner, and the outbidding of their lies circumstantial by an assertion monstrously direct on the part of the 'Poticary[1]. The humour of the whole is inimitable, but at the end the author takes occasion to show that it is the abuse and not the use of means of edification which he has been satirising. This interlude is in many respects curious as an illustration of manners as well as character; and the Pardoner's list of his relics is only equalled by the Palmer's enumeration of his pilgrimages, of which his rival sums up the result thus:

> 'And when ye have gone as far as ye can,
> For all your labour and gostely entente,
> Ye will come home as wyse as ye wente.'

Heywood's lines are often as happy as the above; he had all the power of condensing and pointing expression which might be looked for in an epigrammatist[2]; and there is a really gnomic force in the use to which he puts his power in the few serious words at the close of this interlude. Or

[1] 'And this I wolde ye shulde understande,
I have sene women v hundred thousande:
And oft with them have longe tyme taried;
Yet in all places where I have ben,
Of all the women that I have sene,
I never sawe nor knewe in my conscyens,
Any one woman out of paciens.'

[2] Heywood's *Proverbs* were several times printed; with his *Epigrams* in 1566. He was the grandfather, on the mother's side, of Donne, himself an epigrammatist.

is there not strength of meaning, as well as expression, in the admonition—

> 'But where ye dout, the truthe nat knowynge,
> Belevynge the beste, good may be growynge,
> In judgynge the best, no harme at the leste;
> In judgynge the worste, no good at the beste'—

whatever may be thought of the corollary, which exhibits the author's orthodoxy:

> 'But beste in these thynges it semeth to me,
> To take no judgement upon ye;
> But as the churche doth judge or take them,
> So do ye receyve or forsake them.
> And so be you sure ye cannat erre,
> But may be a frutfull folower.'

The Mery Play between the Pardoner, &c. (1520 *circ.*).

The contents of the *Mery Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neybour Pratte*[1] (printed 1533, but, from a reference to Pope Leo X, apparently written before 1521) are similar in spirit and equally vigorous in expression. The Friar obtains the use of the Curate's pulpit for a begging sermon, in which he is interrupted by the Pardoner, who attempts to extol his relics; they fall to blows, and though the Curate interferes and calls the lay-element to his assistance in the person of neighbour Pratte, they are sorely handled by the intruders. At last these take their departure, 'and a myschefe go with you bothe twayne.'

The Play of the Weather (pr. 1533).

Besides these *Interludes*, John Heywood composed other pieces, one of which exhibits a closer resemblance to the moralities. The *Play of the Weather* (printed 1533) appears to have been an ingenious composition, of which the plot has a more didactic design than the above-mentioned interludes. The gods who superintend the several phenomena of the weather, Phoebus, Saturn, Aeolos, and Phoebe, make complaint against one another before Jupiter, who thereupon through Merry Report, 'the Vice,' summons human witnesses—types of classes specially interested in different sorts of weather, such as the Ranger, the Water-miller, the Wind-miller—before his tribunal. The variety

[1] The substance of this is given in Fairholt's account of Heywood prefixed to his edition of *Wit and Folly* in vol. xx of the *Percy Society's Publications*. The play is now printed in Hazlitt's edition of Dodsley, vol. i. (1874).

of their requests, to which Jupiter undertakes to respond successively, since to satisfy them simultaneously is impossible, proves the absurdity of demanding more than what is in the end beneficial to the human community at large[1].

The Play of Love.

The *Play of Love*[2] may perhaps be compared to an Italian *frottola*, comprising as it does as many as four characters, whose contention is however in the form of a disputation rather than of a dramatic action. They consist of 'the Lover not beloved—the Woman beloved, not loving—the Lover beloved—and one Neither lover nor loved'—which last unhappy wight is introduced as the Vice who 'cometh in ronnynge sodenly aboute the place among the audiens, with a huge coppyr tank on his head, full of squybs, fyred, crying "Watere, water; fyre, fyre, fyre; water, water; fyre;" tyll the fyre in the squybs be spent.' A certain degree of action is thus introduced, as the Lover nervously imagines his mistress to be aflame. But finally argument settles, or rather harmonises, the difficulty in dispute; and the closing speech gives a religious turn to the sentiment of the author.

The Dialogue of Wit and Folly.

Mere dialogues, even if intended for public recital, are not to be included among dramatic works. Heywood's *Dialogue of Wit and Folly*[3], which is a disputation on the superiority of the life of a wise man or a fool, conducted by two persons named John and James, and settled by a third significantly named Jerome, is of this description.

(Rastell's?) Of gentylnes and nobilyte.

A similar piece, which bears the title *Of gentylnes and nobilyte*, was printed about the same time by Rastell, and possibly composed by him. It addresses itself to that question which, after being illustrated by so much wit and wisdom, remains one of the standing bores of intellectual conversation, 'Who is a verey gentylman[4]?' As these

[1] See an analysis, with quotations, by Dr. Bliss, *ib.*

[2] Described at length by Fairholt, *ib.*

[3] Printed by Fairholt, *u.s.* It contains references to 'mayster Somer, the Kyngs gracys foole,' and concludes with a panegyric of King Henry VIII himself.

[4] The best answer is Chaucer's. Of the dialogue *Of gentylnes and nobylyte* an account will be found in Collier, ii. 396–399. Francis Thynn's *Debate between*

dialogues are carried on by typical human characters, they may be said to be, as the latter of them describes itself to be, 'compilid in maner of an enterlude;' but they are not really dramatic. They correspond to the Italian *contrasti* adverted to above. The same is apparently the character of Bulleyn's dialogue of *Death*, printed 1564[1], in which twelve characters appear. It has some interest on account of its literary observations, and as introducing a dramatic imitation of the Northumberland dialect.

Bulleyn's Death (pr. 1564).

Thomas Ingelend's (he is described on the title-page as 'late student in Cambridge') interlude of *The Disobedient Child*[2] probably belongs to the reign of Henry VIII, though it was not printed till 1560, and concludes with the praise of Queen Elisabeth. I mention it here, because, though in manner belonging to the moralities, and introducing the Devil with his 'O, ho, ho, what a felowe am I,' in the old-fashioned style, it has a real dramatic fable, however simple, while its characters are all human types, not personified abstractions. Its story is that of a rich man's son in the city of London, who, instead of following the admonitions of his kind parent, leads a life of wantonness, and crowns his follies by that bugbear of respectability, an imprudent early marriage. This crime brings with itself its own punishment, in the shape of a shrewish wife; and the Prodigal returns repentant to his father. The play straightforwardly teaches its homely lesson, and the characters (including, besides father and son and the young woman, a priest, and as comic personages, a Man Cooke and a Woman Cooke) are distinctly drawn. But the whole manner of the play is still that of the moralities.

Ingelend's Disobedient Child (before 1560).

Thersytes (acted 1537), though in design resembling Heywood's pieces,—its object is to 'declare how that the

Thersytes (acted 1537).

Pride and Lowliness (edited by Collier for the *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841), which Greene reproduced under the title of *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, is not dramatic even in form.

[1] Part reprinted in the Appendix to Waldron's *Sad Shepherd*.

[2] Edited by Halliwell in vol. xxii of the *Percy Society's Publications*. This play seems to be alluded to in the sarcastic remarks of Will Summers on 'the prodigal child in his doublet and hose all greasy,' in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*.

greatest boesters are not the greatest doers,'—is curious as nominally introducing a character from secular literature; but though there is some display of classical learning, the action is that of the simplest kind of English interlude, and the fun is of the most straightforward kind. *Robyn Conscience* (probably written about this time) seems to be more properly described as a moral dialogue, or series of dialogues, than as an interlude proper; for the characters, with the exception of the hero, are allegorical abstractions. The interlude of *Calisto and Meliboea* (published about 1530), on the other hand, has a regular plot. It is very gross, though it ends with a most edifying moral address on the bringing-up of 'young people.' The great step in advance which this last-named play exhibits, in substituting individual personages for mere general types, would be of higher significance could it be regarded as in any sense an original work[1].

Robyn Conscience (1530 *circ.*).

Calisto and Meliboea (1530 *circ.*).

The first extant English comedy.

Just, however, as in tracing the beginnings of English tragedy we observed, that though the influence of Italian dramatists is perceptible in some of its earliest original efforts, the earliest of them all was due to the direct influence of the study of an ancient Roman dramatist, so the first English comedy is the immediate fruit of the example of Plautus, without any intermediate Italian agency. *Ralph Roister Doister*[2], the work of an English scholar and schoolmaster, is descended directly from the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus. This Latin author had attracted the attention of others besides professed scholars already before this time; for we have already noted how one of his comedies (doubtless in the original) had been acted at Court before Henry VIII in the year 1520; and how the interlude of *Jack Juggler* (performed under

Udall's Ralph Roister Doister (1551 or earlier).

[1] It was founded on '*Celestina, Trajicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*,' an Italian translation of the Spanish tragicomedy noticed above (p. 131), published in 1505. Cf. Klein, iv. 591, who considers this play to have helped to suggest the *Virginia* of Accolti, and the latter again to have been used by Shakspere for his *All's Well that Ends Well*. *Thersytes* and *Calisto* are printed in Hazlitt's edition of Dodsley, vol. i. (1874); as to *Robyn Conscience* see Collier, ii. 402–407.

[2] Printed by F. Marshall, 1821; and to be printed in the new edition of Dodsley.

Edward VI) was derived from a comedy of the same author. An English version of the *Andria* of Terence was printed in 1530, and seems to have been intended for representation[1].

Ralph Roister Doister is beyond dispute entitled to be called the earliest extant English comedy. Palsgrave's *Acolastus*, a Latin comedy, composed in 1529, was translated into English prose, and published with this version in 1540[2]; but *Ralph Roister Doister* is the first original English comedy. An impression of it—the unique copy, now in Eton College Library—was discovered in the year 1818. The copy has lost its title-page, and is therefore without date: but the play is quoted in Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, printed in 1551; and in 1566 a license for printing it was obtained from the Stationers' Company. The play is therefore at least fourteen years anterior in date to the first known edition of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575).

The author of *Ralph Roister Doister* was Nicholas Udall, who was a master first at Eton, and afterwards at Westminster, and who in 1532, together with Leland, composed a pageant for the entry of Queen Anne Boleyn into London, after her marriage[3]. It was customary for the Eton boys to perform plays in the Christmas holidays, and this adaptation of Plautus was probably written for the purpose. But though both Plautus and Terence are duly mentioned in the prologue, the scene is laid in London, and the characters were doubtless represented as types of contemporary manners.

Their names are onomatopoeic[4]. The hero's has already occurred to us in a morality, though this is of later date than Udall's comedy, and it recurs elsewhere. He is a

[1] Collier, i. 88. Another translation of the Andria was printed in 1588. 'Old Chremes in the play' is mentioned in the *Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*. It may be worth remembering that a comedy of Aristophanes, the *Plutus*, had been performed at Cambridge in the original Greek about the same time. Morley, *First Sketch*, p. 301. This performance had a purely scholastic aim—to illustrate the new, and correcter, pronunciation of Greek.

[2] See Dodsley, vol. i. p. 47, note (1825).

[3] Collier, ii. 446. Udall also wrote a sacred drama, *Ezechias in English*, which was acted before Queen Elisabeth at King's College, Cambridge, in 1564.

[4] For similar names cf. a speech in *Thersytes* (p. 422, *u. s.*).

vain-glorious, cowardly blockhead, of whom the *Pyrgopolinices* of Plautus is the precise prototype. Matthew Merrygreek is the Artotrogos of Plautus, the standing figure of the parasite of the Greek new comedy and its Latin reproductions. Besides these, there are Gawyn Goodluck, Tristram Trusty, Dobinet Doughty, Harpax, Truepenny, Sim Suresby, Dame Christian Custance (Constance) the heroine, Madge Mumblecheek, Tibet Talkapace, and Annot Alyface. The characters conduct themselves according to the promise of their names. The dialogue is vigorous to a fault, and interlarded with an unconscionable number of strange oaths. The construction of the plot is both clear and ingenious; and the device of the letter, which by the false interpunctuation of the parasite conveys to the heroine the directly opposite meaning to that which his master intended it to bear, is amusing enough[1]. A piece of broader fun, and one which doubtless commended itself highly to the Eton actors, is the free fight between the men and the women[2]. At the end, all the characters peaceably unite in speaking a 'tag' in honour of Queen Elisabeth, which may, however, possibly be a later addition.

Still's (?) Gammer Gurton's Needle (pr. 1575).

Gammer Gurton's Needle[3], now usually regarded as our second English comedy, was printed in 1575, with the statement that it had been acted 'not long ago' in Christ's College, Cambridge. Its authorship is attributed (on not quite conclusive evidence) to John Still, who was successively Master of St. John's and Trinity Colleges, Cambridge, and died as Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1607[4].

[1] It proceeds upon the same humorous notion as that occurring in the Prologue to the Tradesmen's Play in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the speaker of which does not 'stand upon points, rides his prologue like a rough colt, and knows not the stops;' by which means he effectually mangles the meaning of his text, 'nothing impaired, but all disordered.'

[2] Rapp (*Englisches Theater*, p. 126) has pointed out the resemblance of this episode to an infinitely funny (and also infinitely coarse) passage in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*.

[3] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. ii.

[4] From a passage in Martin Marprelate's Epistle (1588) it would appear that Dr. Bridges, Dean of Salisbury, the author of the *Defence of Church Government* attacked in that celebrated libel, had been credited with the authorship of this play. But M. M. thinks that the internal evidence of 'some

Though this play was probably composed at a later date than *Ralph Roister Doister*, it exhibits no advance upon its predecessor either in construction or in diction. Its plot is slighter, and its language coarser, than those of the other play. All the characters, gaffer and gammer, priest and justice, talk in the same unelevated strain. The parson is particularly wanting in refinement, and is treated with the most undisguised contempt by characters and author. The plot is of the most childish nature. Diccon (*i.e.* Richard) is its evil genius; his machinations create every successive complication, but in the end he is subjected to a merely mock penalty. Of course we have here a representative of the Vice of the old moralities. The diction is more antiquated than that of *Ralph Roister Doister;* the language of the peasants being that with which we are already familiar. The touches of humour are only occasional[1], and it has been truly remarked, that the song in praise of ale, which is still occasionally heard in convivial spheres ('Back and syde go bare, go bare,' &c.), is the best thing in the play. The humorous idea of making the whole action of a play turn on the fortunes of an inanimate 'property' has given rise to some of the happiest creations of the comic drama in widely different species; but *Gammer Gurton's Needle* can hardly be included in the list[2].

Probably anterior in date of composition to *Gammer*

witte and invention' in the author of the play disproves the supposition. See *Epistle*, p. 13 (Puritan Discipline Tracts edition, 1843); and cf. an allusion in the *Epitome*, p. 55.

[1] *e.g.* in Hodge's account to the vicar of the grievance of the lost needle, where, after the manner of the uneducated of all times, he cannot bring out a single clause without the support of an expletive:

'My Gammer Gurton here, see now,
Sat her down at the door, see now,
And as she began to slisher, see now,
Her needle fell on the floor, see now,
And while her staff she took, see now,
At Tyb her cat to fling, see now,
Her needle was lost in the floor, see now,
Is not this a wondrous thing, see now.'

[2] In German literature two occur to me; the charming rustic comedy of *Der zerbrochene Krug*, by that true poetic genius, H. von Kleist; and Platen's famous Aristophanic burlesque on the Destiny-tragedies, *Die verhängnissvolle Gabel*.

Rychardes' Misogonus (1560 *circ.*).

Gurton's Needle, though the date of the MS. in which it is preserved is 1577, was the comedy of *Misogonus*, apparently written by one Thomas Rychardes. Here too we have a character, Cacurgus, who is the mischief-making buffoon of the play, and recalls the Vice of the moralities. But he is more emphatically than any similar character in our old plays a representative of the domestic fool, and calls himself Will Summer—the name of Henry VIII's court-fool, whose celebrity probably made him eponymous of the members of his profession in general[1].

As *Misogonus* plays in Italy, and the Italian name of Laurentius Bariona is mentioned on its title-page, we may conclude its original to be an Italian novel or play. That the English comic stage was beginning, like the tragic, to turn its attention in this direction, is however proved with certainty by Gascoigne's *Supposes*[2] (acted at Gray's Inn in the same year as his *Iocasta*, 1566). This comedy is a translation of *I Suppositi* of Ariosto, acted in 1519. The literary genius of the author of the *Steele-glasse*, one of our most effective didactic satires, was well employed in reproducing, in flowing and facile English prose, the liquid iambics, with a dactyl at the end of the line, of his Italian original. Gascoigne's cleverness as a translator is already manifest from the Prologue or Argument, which plays with graceful lightness on the title of the comedy[3]. Its fable is a very ingenious combination of Terence and Plautus, and suggested to Shakspere part of the plot of his *Taming of the Shrew*, as well as (possibly) the name Petruchio.

Gascoigne's Supposes (acted 1566).

Italian plays and novels were now largely resorted to by the writers of English comedies; in his *School of Abuse* Gosson mentions *Captain Mario* as a 'cast of Italian de-

[1] Collier, ii. 468. Mr. Collier shows from internal evidence that *Misogonus* must have been written about 1560.

[2] Printed in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. iii.

[3] 'I suppose you are assembled here, supposing to reap the fruit of my travails; and, to be plain, I mean presently to present you with a comedy, called *Supposes;* the very name whereof may, peradventure, drive into every of your heads a sundry suppose, to suppose the meaning of our supposes,' &c. Cf. Klein, iv. 326 *seqq.*, for an analysis of Ariosto's play.

vises;' and in the list of plays acted at Court from 1568–1580 we recognise the influence of Italian reading. Native subjects were however also treated—the *History of the Collier* is of course a dramatic representation of the famous Croydon worthy[1]; and the hero of *Tooley* was possibly the player of that name. And at the same time English writers continued to go directly to Classical sources. A *Historie of Error*, which may have been the foundation of Shakspere's *Comedy of Errors*, was acted at Court in 1577, and was possibly, like the Shaksperean piece, founded on that Plautine comedy, the *Menaechmi*, which has produced so endless a crop of imitations[2]. In 1595 was printed the *Menaechmi taken out of Plautus*, by 'W. W.,' who states that it was by him 'chosen purposely from out the rest, as least harmefull, and yet most delightfull;' while in the previous year was printed that old *Taming of the Shrew*, which was, with altered names and scenes (for it plays at Athens), at a doubtless early period of his career adapted by Shakspere[3].

Other early comedies on Italian, Classical, and native subjects.

Thus easy and natural, though at the same time aided by Classical and Italian models, had proved the transition from the moralities to comedy in England. Flexible by its nature, this branch of dramatic literature sprang into vigorous and varied life almost immediately after it had been called into being; and in reviewing its further progress, the only difficulty will be to select sufficiently distinctive authors and works from a superabundance of creative activity.

[1] Possibly this was Ulpian Fulwell's morality. (*Ante*, p. 74.) The extant play of *Grim the Collier of Croydon* is stated to have been printed in 1599 (it was reprinted in its present form in 1662), but was probably written at an earlier date. It must however have been written subsequently to the publication of the *Faëry Queen*. See Dodsley, vol. xi.

[2] The *Menaechmi* of Plautus is itself from a Greek original; not, it seems, as used to be thought, by Epicharmus, but by Posidippus. The title of this Greek comedy was doubtless Δίδυμοι, like that of all Greek comedies turning on the deceptive likeness of twins. Plays of this title by not less than six authors are actually mentioned. The variations of the same idea in both ancient and modern plays are too numerous for mention. See Brix, *Einleitung zu Ausgw. Komödien des Plautus*, Bd. iii.

[3] Both these old comedies are printed in vol. i. of the *Six Old Plays* mentioned above. See below as to the sources of the Shaksperean plays.

Summary of the beginnings of English Tragedy

Henceforth then I shall, in treating of the progress of our dramatic literature, be able to confine my remarks to works of literary mark or special historical significance. In this chapter I have traced the beginnings of the regular English drama in its two species through their connexion with earlier forms of dramatic composition, and through that with Classical and Italian models. TRAGEDY was derived from the mysteries and moralities through the transitional phase of the chronicle histories, and with the aid of the examples of Seneca, and secondarily of his Italian imitators. Italian romance, but not this exclusively, suggested a wider variety of subjects, of a cast dealing by preference with horrible and exciting events. These subjects were partly historical and political, partly domestic; and both kinds were seized upon by our early tragic dramatists. But the national history likewise continued to furnish subjects; and the *chronicle history* remained a favourite species of dramatic composition.

and Comedy.

COMEDY sprang more easily from the moralities through the transitional phase of the interludes, and with the aid of the examples of Plautus and Terence, and secondarily of the Italian comic dramatists. The combination of marked characters, often of a typical kind, with complicated and interesting plots, which these dramatists loved, led in the direction of comedies of incident as well as of comedies of character. The mixture of tragic with comic motives led to tragicomedy; of which the Spanish as well as the Italian theatre furnished some contemporary examples; and the precedent of the Italian pastoral drama encouraged the introduction of figures and stories from Classical mythology. The vivacity of the *commedia dell' arte* and of the *masked comedy* suggested to the English writers many hints; but it was in the literature of *regular* Italian comedy that they continued to find the most numerous examples for direct imitation.

The period opening the great age of our dramatic literature

Under these more immediate influences opened, in the third decade of Elisabeth's reign, the great age of English dramatic literature. The period was in almost every respect a significant epoch in the history of the nation. The

die had been cast in the great struggle between Spain and Rome on the one side and the Protestant North on the other. England had assumed her position in the van, and the faltering hands of Elisabeth had at last thrown away the scabbard. Her people felt more distinctly than she the necessity for a full and sustained effort; and fortune crowned the national hopes by the dissipation of the Spanish Armada, by the gradually established success (to which England's direct aid had contributed little or nothing) of the revolt of the Netherlands, and by the overthrow of the cause of the Catholic League, and of the ascendancy of the Spanish party, in France.

under its general historical aspect.

It was in the period of Elisabeth's reign, which may be considered to date from the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (1587) and the destruction of the Spanish Armada (1588), that Elisabethan literature accomplished its great works, and testified to the greatness of the age which produced it. Still subject to the influence of the Classical Renascence, and pursuing with increasing rather than abated ardour the study of foreign, especially Italian, models, our literature became at the same time thoroughly national that it became really great. Spenser is at once one of the most scholarly and one of the most English of our poets[1]. Neither the pedantic influence of such a friend as Gabriel Harvey, nor the antiquated tastes of such a patroness as Elisabeth, could denationalise his mighty muse.

Our literature becomes thoroughly national.

In every direction literature was contending for the smiles of royal favour which typified the acquisition of national popularity. The seminaries of learning and the homes of law were full of literary adventurers, the success

[1] The union of these characteristics is already perceptible in the *Shepherd's Kalendar*, with the publication of which in 1579 the great Elisabethan age of our literature may be fairly said to begin. Ten years later Spenser presented to the Queen the first three books of his master-piece, a poem not more national in spirit than it is in colouring. Coleridge has sufficiently illustrated this latter characteristic. Sidney's *Arcadia* was written in 1580–1; Warner's *Albion's England* was published in 1586; Daniel began his original literary career in 1592; Drayton in 1591; Davies in 1596. The earliest of Ralegh's literary labours are about contemporary with these dates, as is the date of Hooker's great work, the noblest monument of Elisabethan prose.

of whose efforts made them national poets, just as the achievements of the sea-rovers of Devon made them national heroes. Often, as in the case of Ralegh, the double venture was made by the same person. And the born favourites of fortune were as eager in the strife as those whose ambition prompted them to be the authors of their own greatness. The tears of the Muses dropped on the laurels which Sidney had gained by the death of a hero.

The dignity of the drama begins to be recognised.

At such a time genius, if it turned its eyes in the direction of the stage, could not fail to make it serve the highest purposes which it is capable of fulfilling. Hitherto, dramatic entertainments had been regarded as the toys of an hour, suited to beguile the everlasting tedium of fashionable amusements, or to stimulate the passing curiosity of the multitude. The dramatic performances at Court, and on the progresses of the Queen, and in the houses of the nobility, were mere appendages of other entertainments; the London playhouses were the resort of idlers, and in general of the least sober-minded elements of the population. The civic authorities looked with dislike upon the drama; a grave clergyman, such as Northbrooke, condemned it together with dicing, dancing, and 'other idle pastimes;' a repentant play-writer, such as Gosson, heaped upon it all the epithets of righteous abuse.

Yet it was inevitable that, as the royal sanction continued to favour the production of dramatic entertainments—and Elisabeth's love of the drama was, if the term be permitted, simply insatiable—and as the establishment of permanent theatres encouraged the growth of experience in their public, a connexion should establish itself between the drama and the highest aims of contemporary literature. The fact that such writers of mark as Sackville and Gascoigne, induced by the study of Classical and Italian dramatists, had become authors of English plays, was in itself full of promise for the growth of a dramatic literature which might take its place as an equal by the side of the acknowledged branches of literary composition. Those reflecting minds which were beginning to survey with a critical eye, and by means of a method of systematic comparison, the

entire field of poetic literature, were not blind to the claims of its dramatic branch. Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defense of Poësy* (written about 1583), upholds the cause of Comedy and Tragedy, together with that of other species of poetry. He allows that 'naughty play-makers and stage-keepers' have 'justly made odious' the Comic; but, taking his examples from the Latin drama, he insists upon the irresistible force of the comic poet's art. Still less will he consent to a depreciation of Tragedy, for 'it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned[1].' George Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie* (written about 1585, published in 1589), not only discusses the objects of Comedy and Tragedy at length, but in his enumeration of those 'who in any age have bene the most commended writers in our English tongue,' gives it as his 'censure' that 'for Tragedie, the Lord of Buckhurst, and Maister *Edward Ferrys* for such doings as' he has 'sene of theirs do deserue the hyest price: Th' Earle of Oxford and Maister *Edwardes* of her Maiesties Chappell for Comedy and Enterlude[2].' William Webbe, in a work of a rather earlier date (*A Discourse of English Poesie*, 1584), confesses that 'the profitte or discommoditie which aryseth by the vse of tragedies and comedies, hath beene long in controuersie, and is sore vrged among vs at these dayes[3],' but himself discusses the drama at length as an advocate of its claims.

That the stage should soon throw itself with eagerness into the political and religious agitations of the times, was unavoidable; and in the earliest period of its flower we shall find it at once the vehicle and the subject of ardent and bitter controversy. But it is not herein or hereby that lay its path to greatness. The one thing needed was that literary genius should apply itself to this form of literary

Literary genius devotes itself to the drama.

[1] Sir P. Sidney's *Works* (1724), vol. iii. pp. 25–27.

[2] Bk. I. chapters xiv. and xxxi.

[3] p. 30 in vol. ii. of Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poësy*, in which collection Puttenham's treatise is also printed. I confine my quotations to works written before plays of high literary merit had been produced.

composition. Every stimulus and theoretical as well as practical encouragement existed to bring this combination to pass. The great opportunity was therefore consciously seized; and it is no mere phrase to say, that in seizing it our first great Elisabethan dramatists addressed themselves, as men understanding their age, its signs, and its needs, to a national task.

Had it been otherwise, had the creative activity of Elisabethan genius failed to seek in dramatic literature its most attractive and its most appropriate sphere, our literature would have been left without its most splendid and its most peculiar growth. But more than this: the rich mine of our language would have remained unexplored and unworked in its fullest literary capabilities. Lastly, our national history and national life would have missed their most pregnant interpretation. The great Elisabethan age would have been, so to speak, isolated in the national consciousness from its predecessors and its successors, had not its dramatic literature, with a vividness out of the reach of any other literary form, held up the mirror of its past and of its present to itself and to posterity.

What, then, the genius of the Elisabethan age accomplished in dramatic literature, before the consummation of its glories presented itself in the works of its master-mind, I shall endeavour to show in my Third Chapter.

CHAPTER III.

SHAKSPERE'S PREDECESSORS.

IN the group of dramatists of whom I propose to treat under a title which, though of course inaccurate, will I think find its justification, the first place in order of chronology belongs to JOHN LYLY[1]. Though connected personally with one at least of the dramatists to be subsequently noted, and with hardly more than a single exception exercising a marked influence upon the literary developement of all these predecessors of Shakspere, as well as of Shakspere himself, he yet stands in a sense apart, and is, more easily than any other of his contemporaries, distinguishable by characteristics of his own.

John Lyly (1554–1606).

Lyly (whose name I prefer to write as he seems to have written it himself) was born in Kent in the year 1554, and passed through the regular stages of a University education at Magdalen College, Oxford. His literary reputation was established by his first work, the famous *Euphues*, published in 1579. At Magdalen he had in vain sought to obtain a Fellowship by asking the intervention of the Lord Treasurer Burghley[2]; and in spite of the celebrity which

His life.

[1] *The Dramatic Works of John Lilly.* With notes and some account of his Life and Writings. By F. W. Fairholt. 2 vols. See also Collier, iii. 172 sqq., and two essays on *John Lilly und Shakespeare* by C. C. Hense in the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakesp.-Gesellschaft*, vols. vii. and viii. (1872 and 1873).

[2] One passage may be quoted from the letter printed by Fairholt, I. xii, in which the petitioner prays 'ut tua celsitudo dignetur serenissimæ regiæ majestatis literas (ut minus latine dicam) mandatorias extorquere, ut ad Magdalenses deferantur quo in eorum societatem te duce possim obrepere.' Burghley seems to have shown some other kindness to Lyly and to have taken him into his

he achieved as a writer, he never obtained the Court office—of Master of the Revels—on which his heart was set. The two letters which he at different times addressed to the Queen testify to the disappointment with which he had to contend throughout a laborious life. Besides the *Euphues*, and its continuation, *Euphues and his England* (1581), he produced the dramas which will be described below, and possibly one or two more; and engaged with great ardour in the most famous literary quarrel of his times, the *Marprelate* controversy. It has been conjectured that his participation in this quarrel was owing to his desire to revenge himself upon his former friend Gabriel Harvey; who had offended Lyly's patron the Earl of Oxford, and may have in some way been connected with his dismissal from the Earl's service or favour[1]. The pamphlet with which Lyly came forward in 1589 was the *Pappe with an Hatchet*, to which Harvey replied, being in his turn answered by Nash[2]. The latter took the opportunity of paying a high compliment to his friend Lyly's literary ability (and, incidentally, to his power of taking tobacco); but the proofs of Lyly's reputation are too numerous to need mention. The testimony of his antagonist Harvey concurs with that of Meres in his own day, and of Ben Jonson in the next generation, to show the height to which his celebrity as a dramatist had reached. Yet though his fame, even in this capacity, outlasted his life (which came to a close in 1606), it is as the author of *Euphues* that he will always be best remembered.

Euphuism.

The work in question, the delight of its own age, and, until recently, a byword in the mouth of posterity, together with its continuation, lies beyond the range of my subject;

service; but the Fellows of Magdalen either were not approached, or proved as inflexible as they afterwards did on an occasion more famous in English history.

[1] See Introduction to *Plaine Percevall*, p. x (*Puritan Discipline Tracts*), 1860.

[2] Lyly's tract was published in the collection just quoted, 1844. The meaning of its title (a proverbial expression signifying, in Fairholt's words, 'the roughest mode of doing a necessary service') is well illustrated by a passage in *Mother Bombie*, act i. sc. 3.

but as euphuism tinctures every page, almost every line, of Lyly's plays, and influenced a large number of other dramatists,—Shakspere among them,—it is worth while to form a distinct conception of the meaning of the term. Thanks to the efforts of a distinguished historian and critic of our literature, seconded by the republication in a generally accessible form of works which had almost vanished from the light of common day, euphuism may now be studied in *Euphues*, and need no longer be ridiculed perfunctorily at second-hand, on the authority of Shakspere and of Ben Jonson and Marston, or of Sir Walter Scott[1].

If by euphuism be meant (and I take this to be the only legitimate application of the term) a literary style which Lyly's two novels raised to the height of fashion, and of which those novels (and, to an inappreciably less degree, the plays of the same author) furnish the most characteristic examples,—it may be well at once to distinguish what in Lyly may be fairly called euphuistic, and what it would be improper to distinguish by so specific a term.

The classicism of euphuism.

The tendency to display classical learning (of a limited range) in the choice of subjects, characters, and scenery, in a profusion of references and allusions to classical mythology and history, and, above all, in a copious introduction of similes and phrases taken directly from classical sources, and of Latin quotations in the original tongue, is not peculiar to euphuism, though euphuism exhibited it in one of its most exaggerated developements. Euphuism is, after all, only a growth—if the term be preferred, an excrescence—of the Renascence; and the tendency in question it shared with the whole of the Renascence movement. To the belief that the two classical tongues, and Latin in particular, exclusively beseemed the mouth of a highly-cultivated man, had succeeded the conviction that in them were alone to be found the ornaments necessary for

[1] I refer of course to Professor H. Morley's article in the *Quarterly Review* on *Euphuism* (April, 1861), and to Mr. Arber's reprint of both *Euphues* and *Euphues and his England* (*English Reprints*, 1868). An article in the *Saturday Review*, May 29th, 1869, gives an admirable summary of the history of euphuism.

garnishing the rude body of modern speech. The earlier as well as the later representatives of the Renascence movement in the sixteenth century were at one in the belief which lay at the root of this taste, and its traces are to be found, whether we turn to the Essays of Montaigne or the plays of Ben Jonson. Roger Ascham, who abhorred the Italianated style, and Sir Philip Sidney, who assiduously cultivated it, Gabriel Harvey, and Gabriel Harvey's adversaries, Sir Thomas More in Henry VIII's reign and essayists like Overbury and Earle in James I's, were alike under the influence of this tendency.

Signally exemplified in Lyly's plays.

In England, however, it reached its height in the earlier part of the reign of Elisabeth; it was favoured by the learned tastes which the Queen shared with her predecessors and cultivated by her own studies and exercises; and a courtly writer like Lyly, whose main object in life was to gain the good-will of Queen and Court, was certain to carry it to the extreme of possibility. To illustrate this from his plays only, it will be observed that, with a single exception (*Mother Bombie*), the subjects of one and all of them are derived from classical history or legend. The names of his characters, even where not directly taken from a particular legend, together with the subject of the play itself, recall classical originals, and episodes derived directly from classical sources are repeatedly interwoven with the main action. The shepherds in *Gallathea* have Horatian names; the story of Erisicthon in *Love's Metamorphosis* is from Ovid; Sir Tophas in *Endimion* has far more assuredly a prototype in the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus than Falstaff has one in Sir Tophas. But it is quite needless to multiply examples; they crowd every one of Lyly's dramas[1]. Still more obvious is his fondness for classical allusions of every kind, and above all for Latin quotations. Not one of his plays, or of his characters, spares us plentiful illustrations of this description of the author's learning. As it was said of Congreve's foolish personages, that even they

'Talk sense, as if possess'd,
And each by inspiration breaks his jest,'

[1] Cf. Hense, vii. 241 *seqq.*

so it has been remarked of Lyly, that in his plays, 'from the supreme deity Jupiter down to the lowest serving-man, all are familiar with passages from Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero.' A Latin proverb is nowhere deemed out of place; even puns and jokes of a more morally objectionable character are perpetuated upon Latin words; and if the author's Latinity is not always perfect, it rises with a readiness which might excite the envy of modern University senate-houses, had not Latin ceased to be familiar even to their venerable walls[1].

Limits of his scholarship.

There is however other evidence, though of a negative character, that Lyly's classical scholarship was of no very profound description. It is said that, when at Oxford, he was 'always averse to the crabbed studies of logic and philosophy, and did in a manner neglect academical studies.' And indeed, though on occasion he can manage to give his audience a passing taste of Aristotle and Plato (see *Campaspe*), and though in Pliny's *Natural History* he found, for a special reason, a never-failing resource for extraordinary similes, his reading must in general have been confined to a few Latin writers, and above all to the poets Horace, Virgil, and Ovid.

His taste for allegory.

To Ovid he was as a dramatist attracted by the prevailing taste for incarnate allegory, to which the pageants and masques had given so lasting an impulse. Neither Lyly nor euphuism invented the fashion of introducing the deities and other figures of classical mythology as the representatives of corresponding qualities, vices and virtues, emotions and affections. But he carried the tendency to its utmost limit; and was especially adventurous in combining with it a species of allegory which had hitherto hardly ventured beyond its merest beginnings on the stage. Compliments to Elisabeth under the name of Cynthia or Diana were by no means the summit of his ambition; he actually, as will be seen, apprised his audience that there was a hidden meaning in at least one of his plots, and unless the ingenuity of commentators have

[1] Cf. Hense, vii. 262-264.

laboured in vain, that meaning was in more than one case the very reverse of trifling, and in one case is hardly even to be called playful[1]. His boldness in this respect is not the less striking, because his invention as an allegorist seems feeble by the side of that of his great contemporary Spenser.

So far, then, there is in the father of euphuism nothing but an exaggerated developement of tastes and tendencies which he shared not only with a generation of writers, but with the literary currents of a century, indeed of more centuries than one.

The classicism of Lyly was indeed neither profound in its depth nor extensive in its range; and though he was ever drawing bucket after bucket from the stream for his literary needs, he had never bathed in its waters and imbued himself with their influence. This is shown, not so much by the fact that he was fearless of anachronisms and regardless of incongruities, as by his general imperviousness not only to the deeper significance, but even to the outward beauty, of his materials. *Vortit barbare.* And while allegory is at all times prone to congeal into frostiness, or to wither away into lifeless unreality, it becomes in Lyly's hands the merest external machinery, readily lending itself to use, and equally ready to be cast aside when used. But even in this respect he was only a more hardened offender against the demands of nature and taste than others who preceded and followed him in the same direction. If Lyly's allegories are cold and tame, it would be difficult to characterise by kindlier epithets those of Sidney's *Arcadia*, or even many in the later books of the *Faerie Queene*. His pastoral machinery is wearisome enough, but so is that of nine-tenths of the pastoral poetry which has ever been written; while the proportion of English pastorals—whether in a dramatic or any other form—which breathe the air of the woods and meadows which they pretend to people with congenial human figures is even more strikingly small.

His peculiarity is to be sought elsewhere; and even here

[1] See the observations below on *Endimion* and *Mydas*.

he was not properly speaking an originator. The euphuistic style was an exaggeration of the 'Italianating' taste which had begun with the revival of our poetical literature in the days of Henry VIII, but to which Lyly was the first to give full expression in prose. It was his novels which made obligatory upon fashionable parlance a manner of diction which had long been a favourite ornament of verse. There seems no reason to ascribe to the direct influence of Italian or French or Spanish prose models the attempt which Lyly made with so complete a success in his two novels. The combination of cadenced sentences with antithetical alliteration, intersprinkled with assonances of every kind and their inevitable offspring, the uncalled-for pun, was by him first introduced into English prose; and it henceforth seemed to be impossible for cultivated lips to make use of any other form of speech. All bad styles are imitable; and Lyly's was imitated by every lady and gentleman of Elisabeth's Court, and by a host of followers of fashion outside it. What Shakspere in his Armado seems to ridicule as a foreign importation, other dramatists make fun of as a native epidemic. Amorphus in *Cynthia's Revels* is 'a traveller;' but his imitator Asotus is a native growth. Doubtless there were many city ladies who, like Fallace in Ben Jonson's play, dying for the fashions of the Court and the favours of one whom, rightly or wrongly, they regarded as the representative of those fashions, like Master Fastidious Brisk, sought to form their speech upon the accepted model, and, like her, quoted where they could not invent. 'O, Master Brisk, as 'tis in *Euphues*, "Hard is the choice, when one is compelled either by silence to die with grief, or by speaking to live with shame[1]."' But graver personages adorned their eloquence, even on the bench and in the pulpit, with similar flowers; and in literature, whether of pure fiction, of the pamphlet, or of the drama, the fashion thus fostered continued to prevail for nearly a century. In Italy as well as in France the affected style of which Lyly had given the most exaggerated examples

The distinctive characteristics of euphuism proper.

[1] *Every Man out of his Humour*, act v. sc. 7. Cf. also the endeavours of Simplicius in Marston's *What you Will*, act v. sc. 1.

flourished in prose and in verse. The Italian models of Marini and his followers[1] reacted upon our English poetic literature in the formation of the Fantastic School of the earlier half of the seventeenth century. In France the tendency culminated in the endeavours of the *précieux* and *précieuses* belonging to the circle of the Scudérys, Voiture, and the Hotel de Rambouillet. But in literature it had already flourished a century before; and the opponents as well as the supporters of it had been unable to escape from its influence[2]. And, similarly, it will be found that English literature was, *as a whole*, pervaded by the peculiarities of the euphuistic style; and that even upon those who ridiculed it, it exercised an apparently irresistible influence. Shakspere's euphuism is by no means confined to reproductions of particular phrases and fancies from Lyly, though even these, all deductions being made, are very numerous[3].

Lyly's 'unnatural natural philosophy.'

One distinctive peculiarity of Lyly remains however to be noticed. It is that which Drayton ridiculed when he commended Sir Philip Sidney as the author who

> 'did first reduce
> Our tongue from Lilly's writing then in use;
> Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies[4],'—

or, in Mr. Collier's words[5], upon which it would be difficult to improve, 'the employment of a species of fabulous or unnatural natural philosophy, in which the existence of certain animals, vegetables, and minerals with peculiar properties is presumed, in order to afford similes and illustrations.' The sources of which he made use he happily fails as a rule to specify; and it is not the part of a literary critic's task to ascertain whether he has always quoted his 'facts' from Pliny and other authorities correctly, while it

[1] Cf. Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe* (Roscoe's Translation), i. 451 *seqq.* (Bohn's edition). Marini lived from 1569 to 1625.

[2] So Gérard de Nerval has pointed out, in Dubellay's *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française*, a work written with the intention of purifying and improving by precept the prevalent affected style, examples of the very affectation which in theory it condemned.

[3] See *Shakespeare's Euphuism.* By W. L. Rushton. (1871.)

[4] In a poem to his friend, H. Reynold, of *Poets and Poesie.*

[5] iii. 173.

may be assumed that (like a very different collector of facts and experiments from natural history) he spared himself the trouble of personal verification. If he did violence to scientific truth, it is not for this reason that the reader groans under the endless infliction. The objection lies in the circumstance that Lyly drew in his illustrations of fishes, crabs and the like (to use a familiar phrase) by the head and shoulders, and was little concerned, writing in prose as he did, about assimilating them to a poetic form. In this respect, too, Shakspere, who either borrowed or unconsciously adopted several of these very similes from natural history, made what he adopted his own; and justified as poetic ornaments what in his predecessor had been mere adventitious rhetorical appendages[1].

His real services to dramatic literature.

Such are some of the characteristics of euphuism, and of Lyly's style in his dramas as well as in his more celebrated novels. Neither industry, nor ingenuity, nor wit, can be denied to him; in addition to which he possessed a lyric gift of no common kind, though he unfortunately only very rarely availed himself of it. For most of his lyrical passages are trivial both in subject and in execution, and in fact mere perfunctory transitions in the action of the play. His real service to the progress of the drama, which has not perhaps generally received sufficient attention, is to be sought neither in his choice of subjects nor in his imagery—though to his fondness for fairy-lore and the whole phantasmagoria of legend, classical as well as romantic, his contemporaries, and Shakspere in particular, were indebted for a stimulative precedent. It lies in his adoption of Gascoigne's innovation of writing plays in prose; and in his having, though under the fetters of an affected and vicious style, given the first example of brisk and vivacious dialogue. The ridicule which his affectations earned for him did not prevent his contemporaries and successors from availing themselves of the precedent thus set; and when we rejoice over the flow of wit, the flash of repartee, and the dialectical brilliancy of some of the most famous comic scenes in Shakspere and Ben Jonson, we should not

[1] Cf. the excellent passage in Hense, viii. 269 *seqq.*

forget that the path had first been opened by the writer whom they 'so much outshone.'

A brief survey of Lyly's dramatic works will best exemplify the above remarks.

The Woman in the Moone (before 1584).

Lyly's earliest play (as appears from a line in the Prologue[1]) was *The Woman in the Moone*, written therefore certainly before 1584, and very likely some years earlier, before the author of *Euphues* had formed his style. For it is tolerably simple and straightforward in diction, with only a few classical quotations and reminiscences of the arcana of natural history, and here and there a play on words or alliterative antithesis, to remind the reader of its author when at his best—or worst. The plot of this pastoral comedy is very simple, and its construction is the very reverse of elaborate. Nature, with the assistance of Concord and Discord, in answer to the demand of the shepherds for a representative of the female sex, creates Pandora, the heroine of the play. She is successively exposed to the influence of the several gods, under which she acts as a mere puppet. Saturn makes her 'sullen,' and Jove 'proud;' Mars 'bloody-minded' and exceedingly demonstrative of a tendency to lay hands upon whomsoever she meets; Sol 'a Puritan,' though a Puritan after the fashion of Gabriel Harvey, inasmuch as she is 'inspyrd' to an exercise in Latin verse composition[2]. After this she proves only too apt an automaton in the hands of Venus, and involves herself in a maze of intrigue, from which she next seeks to escape under the guidance of Mercury. Finally, she goes mad under the influence of Luna; and is by Nature banished into the Moon for a perpetual dwelling-place. Hither her unfortunate husband, Stesias, is bidden follow her, so as to become the Man in the Moon; and to revenge himself on Gunophilus, Pandora's servant and the clown of

[1] 'Remember all is but a poet's dreame,
The first he had in Phœbus' holy bowre,
But not the last, unlesse the first displease.'

[2] See the odd scene, act iii. sc. 2, in which Pandora puts Stesias through a lesson in poetry very similar to that undergone by M. Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

the play, who for his ready subservience to her frailties has been changed into a 'hathorne,' the Man in the Moon undertakes to

> 'rend this hathorne with my furious hands,
> And beare this bush, if eare she looke but backe,
> I'le scratch her face that was so false to me[1].'

It may be worth noting that the whole of this play is introduced by *Prologus* as the poet's dream, a device familiar enough to Chaucer and his successors, and adopted, very possibly at the suggestion of this production of Lyly's, by Shakspere in his lovely fairy-drama[2]. That an allegorical meaning of a personal kind underlies Lyly's play, seems to me wholly out of the question. It would have been a sorry compliment to Queen Elisabeth to designate her under the name of Luna as the final refuge of the errant Pandora[3].

Campaspe (pr. 1584).

Lyly's second play is the 'moste excellent Comedie of *Alexander, Campaspe and Diogenes*, played before the Queene's Majestie on twelfe day at night, by her Maiesties Children, and the Children of Paules,' also played at the

[1] As to the relation of this device to the popular fable of the Man in the Moon, see Fairholt's note, ii. 282. For further information on the subject of the popular farce he refers to Halliwell's folio edition of Shakspere, *ad* the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where by the bye 'Moonshine' is far less communicative of elucidatory learning than his commentator: 'All that I have to say, is to tell you, that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.'

[2] See Fairholt's note, ii. 278; where the resemblance is pointed out between the thought in the lines quoted above at the close of Lyly's prologue, and Shakspere's—

> 'If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this (and all is mended),
> That you have but slumber'd here
> While these visions did appear.'

The same idea recurs, with an even closer resemblance to the Shaksperean passage, at the close of the *Prologue at the Court* to *Sapho and Phao:* 'In all humblenesse we all, and I on knee for all, intreat, that your Highnesse imagine your selfe to be in a deepe dreame, that staying the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe but to say, *and so you awake.*'

The original suggestion of the machinery of a dream was of course due to the *Somnium Scipionis* of Macrobius; the tenacity with which it was repeated, to the popularity of the *Roman de la Rose.*

[3] This is rightly seen by Hense, *u.s.*, vii. 248. The notion seems to have been suggested as the 'piquantest' thing in the play by Mézières.

Blackfriars, and first printed in 1584. Here we have the author of *Euphues* in all the glory of his style fresh upon him, and incurring in consequence the censure of Schlegel, which no one will be found to dispute, that this play furnishes a warning example, how anecdotes and epigrammatic conceits are incapable of forming a dramatic whole. Indeed, the comedy is little more than a dramatised anecdote; but within these limits (excluding it as they do from the domain of the legitimate drama) the production is singularly entertaining; and it is easy to understand how it served to gratify the tastes both of the Court and of the popular audience before which it was repeated. (It has accordingly two prologues and epilogues, addressed severally to the two audiences.) The slight substructure of story consists of the loves of Alexander and Apelles for the Theban captive Campaspe, and the resignation of her to the painter by the king, who at the close shakes off his fancy and starts to woo another mistress, Glory, in the Persian wars. Round these personages are grouped the soldiers and courtiers of Alexander, with the philosophers of the Court and the philosopher of the street, Diogenes, and his attendant Manes. Thus the ingenious author is easily enabled, as he says in one of the prologues, to mix 'mirth with councell, and discipline with delight, thinking it not amisse in the same garden to sow pot-hearbes, that wee set flowers.' To continue the antithesis, I think the 'pot-hearbes' will be preferred to the 'flowers;' the ready replies of Diogenes to the profundity of Aristotle and Plato and the harangues of Hephaestion; and the charming song of Apelles to the long soliloquy which precedes it, steeped in allusions to natural philosophy and medicine[1]. There is in this play, besides a great amount of far-fetched and more or less deplorable ingenuity, much real wit; and the 'quips' of Diogenes could not be easily surpassed for their swiftness and smartness. He remains victor in all the

[1] Act iii. sc. 5. The song is the charming 'Cupid and my Campaspe played,' &c., which has justly attracted the praise of several critics, and was printed by Bp. Percy in his *Reliques*. Herrick has written nothing neater and prettier.

except perhaps in a brief bout with his servant
; and the speech which he addresses to the Athe-
ıo were assembled to see him fly, while he con-
nself with flying over their disordered lives, is not
power[2]. The whole of this comedy, with the ex-
of the songs, is in prose; Lyly's conceits almost
g the place of metre, as Marlowe's 'high-astound-
ıs' were intended to compensate for the absence
e.

slighter in texture than *Campaspe* is Lyly's next
pho and Phao, which was, like the former, acted
he Court and the Blackfriars Theatre, and printed

Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584).

Indeed, notwithstanding the display which it
of odd (and often extremely doubtful) physical
and of Lyly's usual ingenuity in diction, it could
ıave sufficed to engage the attention of its au-
had it not in its plot (if it deserves the name) con-
n allusion to relations which the author was obvi-
ıwilling to allow to be more than guessed at[3].
se the breaking off of the action with so lame a
ɔn as Phao's departure from Sicily, of whose prin-
ho he is enamoured, while Venus herself is in love
n, would be quite inexcusable. It is however
ary to seek to solve the riddle, though the solution
very probably found in the same direction as that
ore complicated problem presented by *Endimion.*
ıion, the Man in the Moone (first printed in 1591),
e respects than one the most noteworthy of Lyly's
: works. While exhibiting all the peculiarities of

Endimion (pr. 1591).

: ii. sc. 1. Manes (named, as Psyllus says, '*Manes, à Manendo*, runneth away') is a kind of philosophical Launcelot Gobbo. 'I did way, but retire,' he says in answer to Psyllus' jest. And when ınnounces his determination to put him away and serve himself *eo tui vel te*,' he replies that he means to run away again '*quia scio argentum.*' Manes' definition of a 'quip' may be worth citing 'ee great girders call it a short saying of a sharpe wit, with a bitter weet word.'

sc. 1. 'All conscience is sealed at Athens. Swearing cometh of le: lying of a quick wit: flattery of a flowing tongue: undecent nerry disposition. All things are lawfull at Athens.'

last speech of *Sybilla* at the end of the play, and the *Epilogue.*

its author's style, and in sentiment[1] as well as in express recalling *Euphues*, it derives life, or at least the sembla of life, from the reference which it unmistakeably betr to real events and personages. There is accordingly sor thing not widely remote from real passion in the amor declamations of Endymion; and something like charac in the ridiculous figure of the 'bragging Soldier' and fool pedant Sir Tophas[2]; and even in the absence of a key its allegorical significance, this play possesses an inter beyond most of Lyly's other dramatic productions.

Such a key it has however been sought to furnish; a though I quite share the feeling expressed by the p verbial sarcasm of Lyly's age, which he himself quotes another play[3], 'Good wits will apply,' yet in the pres instance the ingenuity of interpreters seems challenged the puzzle, and has not been found wanting to the em gency. In a most elaborate argument, which I shall ag have occasion to notice in connexion with Shakspere's Mi summer Night's Dream, Mr. Halpin[4] has examined length the question of the secret meaning of Lyly's come

[1] See the contrast drawn between friendship and love by Geron, act iii. 4, which quite accords with the social philosophy of the novel.

[2] Some of the dialogue in which Sir Tophas takes part is excellent fooli See e. g. act iii. sc. 2, where on Tophas sighing 'Hey ho!' his attend 'Epi' enquires: 'What's that?' 'An interjection, whereof some are mourning: as eho, vah.' 'I understand you not.' 'Thou seest me.' (i. e. Aye.) 'Thou hearest me?' 'I.' 'Thou feelest me?' 'I.' 'I not understand'st me?' 'No.' 'Then am I but three quarters of a nou substantive. But also *Epi*, to tell thee troth, I am a nowne adjecti 'Why?' 'Because I cannot stand without another.' 'Who is tha 'Dipsas,' &c. Mr. Halpin thinks Sir Tophas may have been intended Gabriel Harvey, with whom, as has been seen, Lyly was at feud.

[3] *Sapho and Phao*, act iii. sc. 2; cf. Fairholt's note, i. 294. Ben Jonson more than one humorous attack upon the over-ingenuity in question; *Magnetic Lady*, act ii. *ad fin.*; and above all the well-known reference in Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* to 'state-decypherers, or politic picklocks the scene, so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by gingerbread-woman, who by the hobby-horse man, who by the costardmon nay, who by their wares.' As applied to problems of real interest and portance, ingenuity of this kind, as it is more tempting, is not less dangerc its chief defect generally lies in its excess, as in the well-known experiment Süvern upon Aristophanes, the *Birds* in particular.

[4] *Oberon's Vision in the M.-N.'s D. illustrated by a comparison with Ly Endymion.* By the Rev. N. J. Halpin. (Shaks. Soc. Publ., 1843.)

and has come to the conclusion that it is a dramatic representation of the disgrace brought upon Leicester (Endymion) by his clandestine marriage with the Countess of Sheffield (Tellus), pending his suit for the hand of his royal mistress (Cynthia). Endymion's forty years' sleep upon the bank of lunary[1] is his imprisonment at Elisabeth's favourite Greenwich; the friendly intervention of Eumenides is that of the Earl of Sussex; and the solution of the difficulty in Tellus' marriage to Corsites is the marriage of the Countess of Sheffield to Sir Edward Stafford. I need pursue this solution no further, except to note that under the three heads of 'highly probable,' 'probable,' and 'not improbable,' Mr. Halpin has assigned originals to all the important characters of the piece. I am inclined to think the attempt successful; that Cynthia is the Queen is of course certain—Spenser had already sung of her under this name; that Leicester is Endymion is hardly open to doubt; and the course of the main action seems admirably to accord with the suggested interpretation.

That Shakspere was familiar with *Endimion* is obvious from resemblances to passages in it occurring in plays of his own beyond a doubt later than it in date of composition[2].

Gallathea (pr. 1592).

Gallathea (first printed in 1592), though its scene is laid in Lincolnshire, and some comic characters of a modern cast are introduced—indeed 'Raffe' is a fair specimen of the clown of our old comedy, and the figures of the 'Alcumist' and the 'Astronomer' are satires on the false science of the day—is a mythological trifle devoid of any secondary significance. The plot, which involves the disguise of two maidens as boys, and their consequent passion for one

[1] Endymion's resolution, because 'on yonder banke never grew anything but lunary,' never hereafter to 'have any bed but that banke,' is a genuine piece of practical euphuism. It reminds the editor of the Continuation of Dodsley (ii. 33) of the *Humorous Lieutenant* of Beaumont and Fletcher, who, 'when, by magical delusions, he falls in love with the old *King*, determines to lodge in *King-street*.'

[2] See act iv. sc. 2: 'Enter the Watch;' and act iv. sc. 3: 'Song by Fairies;' the resemblance between which passages and scenes in *Much Ado* and the *Merry Wives* will at once force itself on every reader's notice.

another, is most flimsily constructed; and little is made either of the comic or the pathetic element in the situation. On the other hand, there is some pretty toying with the fancy of Cupid's capture by Diana's nymphs, who subject him to a series of penalties in revenge for his misdeeds, first making proclamation as follows:

> 'O yes, O yes, if any maid,
> Whom lering Cupid has betraid
> To frownes of spite, to eyes of scorne,
> And would in madness now see torne
> The boy in pieces,—
> Let her come
> Hither, and lay on him her doome.'

This is more amusing than Diana's harangue to her nymphs, which with its 'Now, ladies,' resembles an opening speech in a meeting of female politicians. The puns with which this play abounds are even more numerous and more atrocious than usual.

Mydas (pr. 1592).

Of Lyly's remaining plays, that which stands next in date to a certain degree resembles *Endimion*.

While it is hard to convince oneself that the comedy of *Mydas* (first printed in 1592) is nothing short of an elaborate political allegory[1], it is certainly seasoned by political allusions. The time of its production was favourable to hits at Philip of Spain, who is certainly more than once satirised as Midas[2], while England is referred to as Lesbos which 'the gods have pitched out of the world, as not to be controlled by any in the world,' and her sovereign as the inevitable Diana. The expedition to Cadiz[3] and Philip's anxiety for what he treated as his daughter's inheritance[4] seem also to be directly pointed at. The play

[1] So Mr. Halpin (*Oberon's Vision*, p. 103) seems to think, who supplies a key 'conjectural and incomplete' as he avows, but quite sufficiently elaborate, to a number of its characters and allusions. In a 'Concluding Note' to this play in vol. i. of the Continuation of Dodsley, the editor, with ludicrous solemnity, leaves it to the future to decide whether a historical parallel which he draws between Midas and another ambitious sovereign will be completely borne out by the termination of the career of—Napoleon!

[2] Act iii. sc. 1; act iv. sc. 1.

[3] Act iv. sc. 4.

[4] Act v. sc. 3. Isabella Clara Eugenia was put forward by Philip as heiress of France; she was not, as Lyly seems to think, heiress of Spain (Phrygia).

stood in need of these incidental appeals to patriotic sympathy; for it is in truth a very dull production. Apuleius' well-known story is closely followed; but (possibly because the resources of the manager were unequal to such an effect) the turning of all objects into gold is not exhibited on the stage, and the opportunity of displaying the folly of Midas' wish with dramatic force is thus lost. The second part of the action—the story of the ass's ears—is more lively, though it is difficult not to sympathise with Midas for preferring Pan's song, poor as it is, to Apollo's, which is still poorer. The barber and his servant (who says that his master has taught him 'Tully *de oratore*, the very art of trimming') are fairly amusing. The diction is, as usual with Lyly, monotonously cadenced, and there is an abundance of feeble puns[1].

Mother Bombie (pr. 1594).

Fortune-telling, a favourite practice of the age to which Lyly elsewhere makes reference, suggested the eponymous character of his 'pleasant conceited comedie, called *Mother Bombie*' (first printed in 1594); but the cunning old woman of Rochester has little to say or do in the play, although her intervention helps to bring about the solution of its plot. This plot is conceived with considerable skill of invention, and an audacious symmetry unsurpassed by any of our old comedies founded on 'errors,' or mistakes of identity. It will suffice to summarise it in the words of two of its agents[2]:—

'*Memphio* had a foole to his sonne, which *Stellio* knew not; *Stellio* a foole to his daughter, unknowne to *Memphio;* to coosen each other they dealt with their boies [i. e. servants] for a match [in other words, they tried with the help of their servants each to palm off his foolish child upon the supposed sensible child of the other]; wee [the servants] met with *Lucio* and *Halfepenie* [two other serving-men] who told the love betweene their master's children [Accius and Silena], the youth deeply in love, the fathers unwitting to consent . . . then wee foure met, which argued wee were no mountaines; and in a taverne wee met, which argued wee were mortall; and everie one in his wine told his dayes worke, which was a signe wee forgot not our businesse; and seeing all our masters troubled with devises, we determined a little to trouble the water

[1] O'Hara's 'burletta' on the subject of *Midas* is well known, and still, I believe, keeps the stage. It was first acted in Ireland, and appeared on the English stage in 1764.

[2] Act v. sc. 3.

before they drunke; so that in the attire of your children, our masters' wise children bewrayed their good natures [*i. e.* proved themselves the fools they were]; and in the garments of our masters' children yours made a marriage; this all stood upon us poore children, and your young children, to shew that old folkes may be overtaken by children.'

To which it has only to be added, that the two foolish children, Accius and Silena, in the end turn out to be brother and sister, changelings foisted upon Memphio and Stellio, by Vicina, who has brought up their actual children, Maestius and Serena, as hers and as brother and sister, which has prevented their passion for one another from receiving the solution of which it now admits.

Such is the sufficiently ingenious contrivance of the plot of *Mother Bombie*, which every one will allow to be as perfectly balanced as the language in which the play is carried on. It is however by no means deficient in passages of considerable humour; though the author is nowhere so much himself as in the scene where the two clever children display their wit, Livia by displaying a sampler stitched with an emblematic anthology of 'flowers, fowles, beastes, fishes, trees, plants, stones and what not,' and Candius by quoting (in the original tongue) a certain 'fine pleasant poet who intreateth of the art of love, and of the remedie[1].'

Love's Metamorphosis (pr. 1601).

Finally, in the last of the plays which can with certainty be ascribed to Lyly, the 'wittie and courtly Pastorall' of *Love's Metamorphosis* (first printed in 1601), we are, as the description implies, once more transplanted into the favourite atmosphere of the author's fancy. There is no falling-off in the copious industry with which similes and conceits are as usual accumulated round an unsubstantial plot. The characters are of the familiar cast—Ceres and her nymphs, 'cruell,' 'coy,' and 'wavering,' the shepherds their lovers, and Cupid, who in anger at their coldness metamorphoses them into a stone, a rose, and a bird, and only releases them at the conclusion of the play. There is a bye-plot, not very skilfully interwoven with the main action, of the savage Erisicthon, who for destroying the holy tree of

[1] Act i. sc. 3.

Ceres, and with it the life of the unhappy Fidelia who had been changed into the tree[1], is visited by Famine, and to escape its torments sells his daughter Protea to a 'marchaunt.' Protea escapes by changing her aspect, and returns in time, under another disguise (that of the revengeful ghost of 'Ulisses'), to save her lover Petulius from the wiles of the 'Syren.' Thus the materials employed by the author are more abundant than usual; but perhaps there is a comparative lack of vivacity, not wonderful in what this probably was, a production of Lyly's old age.

Plays ascribed to Lyly.

Two other plays, *A Warning for Faire Women* (1599) and *The Maid's Metamorphosis* (1600) have also been ascribed to Lyly. As to the former there appears to be no question of attributing it to him; the latter, though unlike all Lyly's plays chiefly written in verse, in its plot resembles his other pastoral dramas; but is stated to be quite free from some of the most marked peculiarities of Lyly's manner, and as it was published anonymously, need not be discussed among his works[2].

Thomas Kyd (d. 1594 *circ.*).

Before I pass to the group of great dramatists of whom Marlowe was in date, as he seems to me in power, the first, it may be convenient to say a word of an author, the date of whose most famous play it is impossible to fix with certainty, but whom internal evidence certainly entitles to a very early mention among the predecessors of Shakspere. THOMAS KYD, the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, is ranked by Ben Jonson among those whom Shakspere 'outshone'—an honour which it would have been out of the question to pay to the author of any of the plays mentioned in my last chapter. That the same writer adds the epithet of 'Sporting' to Kyd's name, was doubtless only due to the fact that Ben Jonson, like all elaborate writers, dearly loved an epithet. It was in this case assuredly only the result of a pun on Kyd's name; for Kyd's 'sport' is among the grisly horrors of death.

[1] Very possibly the fancy of the tree 'pouring out blood' and giving forth a human voice may have been suggested by the Second Canto of the First Book of the *Faerie Queene* (stanzas xxx. *seqq.*).

[2] Cf. Fairholt, i. xxix. It is described by Collier, iii. 185.

The Spanish Tragedy (1588 *circ.*)

The Spanish Tragedy[1] (so called, as it would appear, not as taken from a Spanish original, but because its scene is laid in Spain, and its subject pretends to be from Spanish history) was certainly printed before its first known edition of 1599, and was probably acted about 1588[2]. It was afterwards very frequently reprinted, and received additions, including the painter's part, from the hand of Ben Jonson. Charles Lamb is sceptical as to Jonson's authorship of certain of these additions, which he terms 'the salt of the old play,' an expression which appears rather too strong, though his extracts no doubt comprise some of the most highly-wrought passages[3]. Ben Jonson was however himself of a similar opinion, for in the *Induction* to his *Cynthia's Revels* he ridicules the man who, 'furnished with more beard than wit,' 'prunes his mustachio, lisps and swears "that the old *Hieronimo*, as it was first acted, was the only best and judiciously penned play of Europe[4]."' That Ben Jonson himself acted Hieronimo seems a doubtful tradition; that the part was originally written for a particular actor, is clear from the repeated allusions to the small size of the hero.

The First Part of Hieronimo (*ante* 1588 *circ.*).

The *Spanish Tragedy*, or *Hieronimo is mad again*, is the continuation of another play, usually called the *First Part of Jeronimo*[5], which may also have been from Kyd's hand. It is far less characteristic of the peculiar manner of its author than the *Spanish Tragedy;* being both slighter in construction and less forcible in diction. Yet it strikes me as perspicuous and spirited, and well prepares the ground for the *Spanish Tragedy*, which is not easy to be understood without a previous perusal of the *First Part.*

[1] Printed in vol. iii. of Dodsley's *Old Plays*, in vol. ii. of Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, and in vol. i. of the *Ancient British Drama.*

[2] Jacob Ayrer's *Pelimperia* appears to follow the oldest form of this play. Cohn, *Shakesp. in Germany*, Part I. p. lxvi.

[3] See his extracts from act iv. in his *Specimen of English Dramatic Poets.*

[4] There can be no reason to apply this to the *First Part.* In *Every Man in his Humour*, too (act. i. sc. 4), a compliment is paid by Ben Jonson to *Hieronimo*, and thus indirectly to himself. Other allusions to the *Spanish Tragedy* will be found in *The Alchemist* (iv. 4); *The Poetaster* (iii. 1); *Bartholomew Fair* (*Induction*): *The New Inn* (ii. 2); *The Tale of a Tub* (iv. 4), &c.

[5] Printed in Dodsley, vol. iii.

The Spanish Tragedy.

The best notion of the plot of the *Spanish Tragedy* may however be obtained from a ballad apparently composed after its production, and accompanied by a terrific woodcut depicting the most sensational scene of this sensational drama. The ballad at the same time attests the popularity of the play, which furnished subsequent dramatists, Shakspere among the number, with abundant materials for genial ridicule. Yet it furnished Shakspere with something more than this; it contains passages which suggest Shaksperian expressions; the notion of the play within the play is in its main design the same as that in *Hamlet;* and indeed the whole idea of the *Spanish Tragedy* only needs inversion to resemble the dramatic idea of *Hamlet* itself. For the subject of Kyd's drama is the effect of the murder of a son upon the mind of his father, whose revenge is slowly prepared, and at last wreaks itself as a Nemesis upon the authors of the original wrong, as well as of the revenge itself.

Schlegel[1] remarks that the whole *Spanish Tragedy* is like the drawings of children, scribbled down without regard to just proportions by an uncertain hand; but he truly adds that, notwithstanding the large amount of bombast, there is a certain naturalness about the tone of the dialogue, and that the change of scene gives to the piece a lightness of movement which to some degree accounts for its popularity. The superhuman machinery which introduces the ghost of Andrea (the first lover of the heroine, who in the *Spanish Tragedy* is enamoured of the son of Hieronimo) and Revenge, has no clogging influence upon the action; and we are in the region of real human passion, powerfully if not always pleasingly drawn. Yet the tender grace of the love-scene between Belimperia and Horatio, which precedes his murder, should not be overlooked; although the author's great effort (heightened by Ben Jonson's additions) is reserved for what follows. After Horatio has been hanged on the stage by his enemies, the body is discovered by his father, the brave old marshal Hieronimo, whose desperate grief and craving for

[1] *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, xiii. (in the original).

revenge become the motive of the climax of the action. That results adequate to the wishes of the most resentful ghost are achieved, will appear by the following speech of the gratified shade:

'Aye, now my hopes have end in their effects,
When blood and sorrow finish my desires.
Horatio murdered in his father's bower;
Vile Serberine by Pedringano slain;
False Pedringano hang'd by quaint device;
Fair Isabella by herself undone;
Prince Balthazar by Belimperia stabb'd:
The Duke of Castile and his wicked son
Both done to death by old Hieronimo;
My Belimperia fallen, as Dido fell;
And good Hieronimo slain by himself:
Aye, these were spectacles to please my soul.'

The circumstance that this play is partly in blank verse, but to a very large extent in rhyme, points to a date of production earlier than that of Marlowe's first work. In any case, Kyd was a dramatist of high capabilities in both construction and expression. Not that he is evenly excellent in either; but he is able to exhibit the operation of incidents upon character, and to depict with real force the workings of passion deeply moved. Herein lies the vast difference between him and the authors of *Gorboduc*.

Solyman and Perseda (pr. 1599).

There is no proof of the tragedy of *Solyman and Perseda*[1], which is introduced, though not at length, as the play within the play in the *Spanish Tragedy*, being a work of Kyd's. It is not dissimilar to the *Spanish Tragedy* in construction—Love, Fortune, and Death appearing as superintendent spirits—but it is less extravagant in execution, and is moreover almost entirely in blank verse.

Cornelia (pr. 1594).

Kyd, whose *Spanish Tragedy* shows him to have been a proficient in Latin and Italian quotations at all events, also translated the French poet Robert Garnier's tragedy of *Cornelia*[2]. The heroine of this play is the daughter of Metellus Scipio and the wife of Pompeius, and her sorrows

[1] Printed in Hawkins, vol. ii.

[2] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. ii. Garnier's *Cornélie* (1574) is described by Ebert (*Entw. d. fr. Trag.* p. 155) as a feeble repetition of his *Porcie*. The background of both plays had an intentional reference to the civil troubles of France.

are made the subject of a drama half-epical in its manner of progress. There is a chorus with lyrics; and the prologue is spoken by Cicero, who proves quite as long-winded as there is every reason to believe he was in real life.

The author of the *Spanish Tragedy* was a contemporary of greater dramatists than himself; but his genius unmistakeably pointed in the direction which our tragic drama pursued in their hands. Himself imitated as well as ridiculed, there is no reason why he should be denied the tribute due to original power.

Chr. Marlowe (1564–93). His Life.

CHRISTOPHER, or Kit, MARLOWE[1], the son of John Marlowe, shoemaker, was born at Canterbury in February, 1563–4, and received his early education at the King's School in that city. Without, as it seems, obtaining one of the scholarships founded for pupils of his school at Bene't (Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge, he entered there in 1580–1, and took the usual Arts' degrees in 1583 and 1587. He was doubtless supported at the University by some wealthy friend,—very likely, as has been conjectured, by Sir Roger Manwood, a Kentish gentleman and Chief Baron of the Exchequer. He was probably intended for the Church, or some other of the learned professions; and of his classical training he gives evidence in his fondness for Latin quotations, which he introduces freely in his *Jew of Malta*, in his *Edward II*, and of course in *Dido*. But at an early age he must have been seized by a passion for the stage, for he had produced his *Tamburlaine the Great* before 1587; and he became a literary adventurer in London, seeking his bread in the only direction in which literature in that age supplied it. Whether he was first an actor, then a dramatic author, or whether, as seems more likely, he reversed the process, cannot be ascertained;

[1] *The Works of Christopher Marlowe.* With some Account of the Author, and Notes. By the Rev. Alexander Dyce. 1850, and 1870.—*The Works of Christopher Marlowe;* edited, with Notes and Introduction, by Lt.-Col. Francis Cunningham. 1870.—Compare for a general estimate of Marlowe: H. Ulrici, *Christopher Marlowe u. Shakespeare's Verhaltniss zu ihen.* (*Jahrbach d. deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, vol. i. 1865.) See also Collier, ii. 107 *segq.*, and Ulrici, *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art*, Section i.

in a ballad produced at a time when some of his contemporaries were still alive, it is stated that he performed at the Curtain (in Shoreditch), and

> 'brake his leg in one lewd scene
> When in his early age'—

from which it is perhaps permissible to conjecture that this accident prevented him from continuing his career as an actor. *Tamburlaine*, of which the Second Part was performed soon after the First, proved an extraordinary success; it was very frequently acted, and is so persistently ridiculed by other writers, that its exceptional popularity is beyond all doubt. *Doctor Faustus*, written, as there is good reason to believe, in 1588, was likewise very successful. The *Jew of Malta*, written probably about 1588 or 1590, followed, and then *Edward II.* The *Massacre of Paris*, which must have been written after August 2, 1589, the day of the death of Henry III (with which event the piece closes), was probably the last of Marlowe's plays written for the popular stage. Thus actively employed in the labours of his profession, Marlowe, we cannot doubt, also fell into the ways of life habitual to its followers in his times—a hand-to-mouth existence, oscillating between excess and want—if the language of a ballad of the age may be accepted as a description of the truth—

> 'Now strutting in a silken sute,
> Then begging by the way,—'

at all events far removed from the respectability with which, as Mr. Dyce points out, both Shakspere and Jonson were able to invest their calling. But he was not without patrons; in the dedication of his posthumous poem of *Hero and Leander*, the publisher speaks of Sir Thomas Walsingham of Chiselhurst as one 'who had bestowed upon the author many kind favours.' But it may be assumed that, in spite of any influences to the contrary, Marlowe became notorious for the licence of his speech as well as the looseness of his life. When the dramatist Greene died in want and misery in September 1592, he left behind him a tract (to which frequent reference will have to be made), entitled *A Groats-worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repent-*

ance[1], which was published by another dramatist, Henry Chettle. This pamphlet contained a violent invective against Marlowe's atheism, and a warning to him to repent, ere it was too late. We are of course by no means constrained to place implicit reliance upon the statements of the unhappy Greene; but the closing scene of Marlowe's own life, which followed only too soon afterwards—June 1, 1593—furnishes, if we are to trust a *consensus* of contemporary accounts, a sad comment upon the neglected warning. Marlowe was stabbed in a tavern brawl, the revolting details of which, especially as their truth or falsehood is not to be determined, may be passed by[2]. Just before his death a 'Note' concerning his opinions had been given in, as ground for a judicial process, by a person named Bame.

No comment is needed on such a life with such an end. Of Marlowe's contemporaries several mention him with generous admiration for his genius;—so Peele, in the Prologue to *The Honour of the Garter*, published soon after Marlowe's death, addresses him as

> 'Unhappy in thine end
> Marley, the Muses' darling for thy verse,
> Fit to write passions for the souls below,
> If any wretched souls in passion speak;'—

Drayton (in the *Battle of Agincourt*) speaks of him in lines of singular beauty, coinciding in thought with a well-known Shaksperian passage:

> 'Next Marlowe, bathèd in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunáry things
> That the first poets had; his raptures were
> All ayre and fire, which made his verses clere;
> For that fine madnes still he did retaine,
> Which rightly should possesse a poet's braine;'

and the tribute is doubly noteworthy as proceeding from

[1] It has been edited by Sir Egerton Brydges; but the portion of it which has special interest for us will be found in the *Introduction* to Dyce's edition of Greene's *Works*.

[2] A remarkable specimen of the 'lie circumstantial' is to be found in Aubrey's statement (quoted by Gifford) that 'Ben Jonson killed Mr. Marlow the poet, coming from the Green Curtain playhouse.' It probably arose out of a mistaken remembrance of the fact that Ben Jonson killed in a duel Gabriel, a member of Henslowe's company of players, in Hoxton Fields. This was in 1598. See *Memoirs of E. Alleyn*, p. 50.

a poet whose own life was well-ordered, and averse from the 'Bohemianism' which, in those days as well as in our own, many excellent people deemed inseparable from the pursuit of literature[1]. Ben Jonson (in his verses *To the Memory of Shakspere*, in which I for one confess myself unable to discover any irony) classes Marlowe among those peers of Shakspere whom Shakspere surpassed, and refers, in a well-known phrase, to his 'mighty line[2].' The anonymous author of *The Returne from Parnassus* describes Marlowe as

'happy in his buskin'd Muse'

though

'unhappy in his life and end,
Pity it is that wit so ill should dwell,
Wit lent from Heaven, but vices sent from Hell.'

The two poets who took upon themselves to continue Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (Chapman and Petowe), of course both apostrophise their predecessor, one calling him 'the prince of poetrie.' Lastly, Shakspere has a brief but kindly reference to his dead fellow-poet in the passage in *As You Like It* (iii. 5), where a line from *Hero and Leander* is quoted:

'Dead shepherd! now I find thy saw of might:
"Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight[3]?"'

For us, who cannot penetrate through the foul mists which obscured the career of this fiery genius, it remains only to lament the loss to our literature of the fruits of a promise without a parallel among our earlier—indeed with one exception among all our Elisabethan dramatists. A

[1] 'He wants,' says the author of *The Returne from Parnassus* of Drayton, 'one true note of a poet of our times, and that is this: He cannot swagger it well at a tavern, or domineer in a pot-house.'

[2] Ben Jonson is, however, thought by Gifford to indicate Marlowe among others in speaking (in the *Induction* to *Cynthia's Revels*) of poets who are 'promoters of other men's jests, and way-lay all the stale apophthegms, or old books, they can hear of, in print or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal.' Mr. Halpin (*Oberon's Vision*, &c.) says that Ben Jonson decried Marlowe in his *Poetaster*, as well as in his *Cynthia's Revels*. As to Gifford's mare's-nest about a theft committed by Marlowe's editor Chapman upon Ben Jonson, see Cunningham, *Notes*, p. 357.

[3] There is no evidence that the references to the story of Hero and Leander in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (i. 1 and iii. 1) were due to Marlowe's poem, which was then in MS. See Delius' Shakspere, i. 41, Note 7.

living poet has met a challenge once thrown out by Hartley Coleridge, and has sought to give a poetic picture of the tragedy of Marlowe's death. Mr. R. Horne's *Death of Marlowe* is an effort not less generous in spirit than powerful in effect; and closes worthily of itself with the beautiful lines from Marlowe's *Faustus:*

> 'Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And wither'd is Apollo's laurel bough.'

It is not Art which is guilty of the fall of such victims as this,—not genius which is the author of such a catastrophe; and while drawing a homely moral, we may at the same time marvel at the blessed healthfulness of spirit which enabled Shakspere to issue unhurt from the temptations which at such a time, in such a life, and amidst such surroundings, seem to have as it were irresistibly overwhelmed Marlowe.

Marlowe left behind him a tragedy, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, which appears to have been completed by Nash, though to what extent it had been left unfinished by Marlowe can be decided only on internal evidence, having regard to which I agree with Dyce that the share of Nash seems to have been comparatively small. There were also some translations[1], epigrams, and an uncompleted work, which is a paraphrase and not a translation, viz. the portion which Marlowe had written of *Hero and Leander*. It is beyond my purpose to criticise this poem, upon which in the eyes of Marlowe's generation his poetic fame rested (it is significant how even in a Prologue to a posthumous reproduction of one of his plays the poet is said to have gained 'a lasting memory' by *Hero and Leander*, while the plays are associated with the renown of a great actor[2]); but, as a comparison between Marlowe and Shakspere will necessarily suggest itself in reference to their dramatic

His non-dramatic works.

[1] The famous lyric by Marlowe, '*The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*,' which called forth Ralegh's *Reply* as well as 'Another of the same nature,' is quoted by Marlowe himself in a comic speech in the *Jew of Malta* (iv. 4).

[2] See Dyce's note to the *Prologue to the Stage, at the Cock-Pit*, prefixed to the *Jew of Malta*. *Hero and Leander* is quoted as a popular work in *Green's Tu Quoque*, printed 1614. In the same year Ben Jonson burlesqued the legend in the puppet-show in his *Bartholomew Fair*.

works, it may be observed that *Hero and Leander*, while extremely sensuous, is, in my opinion at least, in spite of its fanciful excrescences, far more real than Shakspere's *Venus and Adonis*, and far superior to the latter as an epical attempt of the erotic kind. But I turn at once to a brief examination of Marlowe's dramatic works.

Tamburlaine (before 1587).

Of these the first calling for notice is *Tamburlaine the Great*, remarkable both as Marlowe's earliest play, and as the first in which the use of blank verse was introduced upon the public stage. This fact, which has been sufficiently established by Collier[1], it is well to bear in mind in criticising the language and general style of the play. Blank verse had been employed, as we have already seen, in plays intended for performances essentially private in character, and first of all in *Gorboduc;* but an innovation designed to satisfy the public ear is something very different from one experimenting on the taste of cultivated, and in this instance doubtless sympathising, audiences. When the object was to wean the good-will of the public from

'jigging veins of rhyming mother wits,'

which Marlowe in his Prologue asserts his object to be, it seemed necessary to substitute a fresh attraction; and that which Marlowe offered was 'high astounding terms,' *i.e.* a diction which should by its startling vigour furnish a compensation for the accustomed play of rhyme. The promise was well kept in *Tamburlaine;* and though the popularity which it achieved was doubtless owing as much to its strong situations as to the 'mighty line' of its verse, the fact will not be overlooked that the poet had intentionally strained the force of diction to the utmost, and sought to show that blank verse can be as *effective* as rhymed verse. The perceptibility of effort is at once explained, and in a sense excused, by this consideration.

Tamburlaine consists of two parts, each of five acts. It can hardly be called a historical drama, though its hero is a historical personage. Strict historical propriety is of course

[1] *History of Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 107 *seqq.*

the last thing to expect in a play of this description; and even the passage[1] in which Tamburlaine gives his sons a notion of the science of military engineering, odd as it may seem in the mouth of the Scythian shepherd, calls for no exceptional comment. But there is no attempt to give that 'poetical image of historical truth[2]' which Shakspere produced in the midst of free violations of historical accuracy. While however, in the fantastic treatment of its subject, *Tamburlaine* resembles many other Elisabethan plays, the grandiloquence of diction for which it is principally remembered is its distinguishing, though not absolutely peculiar, mark. Throughout the piece there is abundance of the 'thundering speech' which at the outset Mycetes declares to be requisite; and Ancient Pistol's famous quotation, though taken from a passage where the grandiloquence of the language as well as the sensational element in the situations reach their height, is only a sample of the general character of this terrific drama[3]. Yet opportunity is found amidst the din and clamour of battle, and the pomp of kings without number, for amorous passages of considerable beauty; there is genuine passion, though defaced by extravagance, in Tamburlaine's lament over Zenocrate, and true pathos in the appeal of the virgins of Damascus to the conqueror to spare their city. It should be added, that the play was not printed as it was acted, many omissions of 'fond and

[1] Part II. iii. 2.

[2] Ulrici.

[3] The following is the stage-direction: 'Enter Tamburlaine drawn in his chariot by the kings of Trebizond and Syria, with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, and in his right hand a whip with which he scourgeth them: Natolia and Jerusalem' [they are afterwards termed the 'two spare kings'] 'led by five or six common soldiers.' Upon the whole, however, these monarchs fare better than Bajazet, who is put into a cage (like the Anabaptists at Münster), against which he finally 'brains himself,' his wife Zabina following his example.—The same passage, as Dyce points out, which Shakspere ridiculed, is also derided by a host of other writers; *e.g.* Beaumont and Fletcher (*Coxcomb*, ii. 2), and Chapman and his associates (*Eastward Hoe*, ii). Tamerlane is twice mentioned as a proverbial bugbear in *Green's Tu Quoque*. In his *Discoveries*, Ben Jonson reprobates language which flies 'from all humanity, with the Tamerlanes and Tamer-Chams of the late age, which had nothing in them but the scenical strutting and furious vociferation, to warrant them to the ignorant gapers.'—As to Rowe's *Tamerlane*, *vide infra*.

frivolous gestures' having been made by its first editor,—passages, it has been conjectured, comprising the buffoonery of the clown, whose absence from the printed tragedy is certainly no matter for regret.

Doctor Faustus (1588).

The play which Marlowe probably produced next in order to *Tamburlaine* possesses peculiar interest. The story which, as there seems good reason to believe, he in his *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* first published in a dramatic form[1], has had an extraordinary vitality, and is the subject of the masterpiece of one modern European literature. To trace the Faust-legend to its sources, and through its various developments, would be to essay a task beyond these limits. Its original source may be sought in those struggles between Christianity and magic to which already the *Acts of the Apostles* bear testimony. The specific element, however, of the sale of a man's soul in his lifetime to the Devil, can be traced as far back as the sixth century, when the story of *Theophilus* was related in Greek by his pupil Eutychianus; it was afterwards translated by Scandinavian and Teutonic poets; Hroswitha gave a version of it in Leonine hexameters, and it was introduced into the *Golden Legend*. In dramatic literature it first meets us in *Le Miracle de Théophile*, by Rutebeuf, a French trouvère of the thirteenth century; and in the fourteenth followed a Low-German dramatic version. Even earlier in origin than the story of Theophilus is, so far as we know, that of Cyprian of Antioch, which afterwards furnished the materials for Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso;* and the influence of the Virgin is likewise introduced in an Italian *Miracolo di Nostra Donna*, belonging to the close of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century[2]. But the special form in which the legend is alone to be noted here, is that connecting itself with the personage of *Doctor Faustus*, whose name does not appear even in the play which Hans Sachs

[1] See *Marlowe's Faust, die älteste Bearbeitung der Faustsage*, übersetzt, &c. &c. von Dr. A. v. d. Velde (1870).

[2] See Klein, iv. 174, and Düutzer, *Goethe's Faust*. Compare also, as similar in plot, the French *Mystère du Chevalier qui donna sa femme au Dyable* (1505), in Fournier's Collection, p. 175 ff.

devoted to the story of 'the scholar-errant' with the devil's bans.' The original of Doctor Faustus is not the printer Fust, as has been frequently supposed, but a different personage who was known at several universities early in the sixteenth century, certainly at Wittenberg by Melanchthon before 1536. He practised necromancy; and popular tradition accumulated on his head an infinite number of stories. His birthplace, according to Melanchthon, was Knittlingen; but various other places contended for the honour of his nativity, among others Roda in the present Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar; hence Marlowe speaks of Faustus as born 'in Germany, within a town call'd *Rhodes*.' The first literary treatment of the story of Faust was the *Volksbuch* by Spiess, which was published in 1587. English actors had certainly been in Germany before 1588; and of some of these it is known that they returned to their native country in 1587. The earliest English translation of this book has no date; but it was certainly not this translation which Marlowe used as the foundation of his play. The ballad of Doctor Faustus which appeared in England in 1587 or 1588 is independent in origin of the German popular book; but Marlowe's play is distinctly based upon the latter[1]. Not only is there a singular agreement in details; but in both the motive of Faust's sin is the same,—and it is in this that Marlowe's play agrees with the old popular book as well as with the loftiest poetic reproduction which the Faust-legend has ever experienced. In the old book, in Marlowe, and in Goethe, *love of knowledge* is the primary motive which urges Faust to the fatal contract.

It has been remarked with undoubted truth by Goethe's English biographer[2], that the resemblance between Mar-

[1] See v. d. Velde's proofs, p. 27. I have been obliged to content myself with summarising the result of his arguments, as I have no space for a full statement of the controversy.

[2] Lewes, *Life of Goethe*, p. 469. In Mr. Lewes' book will also be found a sketch of Calderon's drama *El Magico Prodigioso*, which is to some degree cognate in subject with Marlowe's play. Those who desire to follow the story of Faust in its dramatic treatment should also not neglect to read the fragment of Lessing's contemplated play of *Faust*, and the sketch of its design, for which Lessing, abandoning the spirit of the Faust-legend which he had previously

lowe's play and Goethe's dramatic poem ceases, or very nearly so, after the first scene (which is, however, preceded by a Chorus as Prologue), where Faustus, in his study at Wittenberg, declares himself at the end of all science, and sighs for something more[1]. The something more which Marlowe's Faustus desires, he feels, unlike Goethe's, absolutely certain of finding in magic. The spirit who obeys the summons of Faustus is Mephistophilis, who is not the Prince of Darkness himself, but only 'a servant to great Lucifer' (in Goethe there is no such distinction drawn, though at the same time his Mephistophiles is introduced as only one among 'the spirits who deny[2]'). In the first colloquy between the pair, Faustus demands of Mephistophilis how it is that if he is damned in Hell he is out of Hell, to which Mephistophilis replies, introducing a thought of deep meaning which is repeated in a subsequent scene:

> 'Why, this is Hell, nor am I out of it.
> Think'st thou that I that saw the face of God,
> And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand Hells,
> In being deprived of everlasting bliss?'

Immediately after forming his resolution, Faustus is distracted by the conflicting suggestions of his Good and Bad Angels; but he agrees to sign the compact which consigns his soul to perdition in return for four-and-twenty years' service on the part of Mephistophilis. There is again a touch of deep moral significance in the reply of Mephistophilis to Faustus' query:

thoroughly perceived, afterwards intended to substitute another conception. See Lessing, *Werke*, vol. i. (1858), and Adolf Stahr, *Lessing*, vol. i. p. 186. I cannot help taking this opportunity of expressing my astonishment at the misinterpretation by certain recent German critics of the close of the *First Part* of Goethe's tragedy. They actually imagine him to have meant his hero, like Marlowe's, to be carried off by Mephistophiles to Hell! Düutzer, in two papers contributed to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in May 1873, under the title of *Her zu Mir*, has satisfactorily disposed of this perverse misunderstanding of Goethe's intention, which is contradictory to the whole scope of his conception.

[1] The character of Wagner, Faust's *famulus*, is also in Marlowe, with some of the touches which make it so lifelike in the German poem.

[2] See the *Prologue in Heaven*.

'*F.* Stay, Mephistophilis, and tell me what good will my soul do thy lord?
M. Enlarge his kingdom.
F. Is this the reason why he tempts me thus?
M. *Solamen miseris socios habuisse malorum.*
F. Why, have you any pain that torture others?
M. As great as have the human souls of man.'

I have made these quotations to show how there are passages of this play which prove that the psychological significance as a poetic conception of such a character as that of Mephistophiles was not wholly absent from Marlowe's mind. But the play, thus wonderfully begun, soon loses its strength of idea. Faustus—and this is finely conceived, though quite inadequately carried out—begins his vain and irresolute repentance immediately after he has done the deed; his Good Angel tells him that it is 'never too late if Faustus will repent;' but his heart is hardened, and he launches recklessly upon his career. The successive scenes representing the period of his command over the services of Mephistophilis are extremely wearisome; but it has to be remembered that the play, in the form in which we possess it, had received additions from other hands (Dekker, Bird, and Samuel Rowley). Critics are of course at liberty to conjecture where to seek for these additions; but it is at least unsafe to pronounce those passages not to be Marlowe's which are directly based on the book which he must have used as the main foundation of his play[1]. From this point of view, part of the buffoonery is, and part is not, to be regarded as probably Marlowe's composition. The examination in natural philosophy to which Faustus subjects his servant seems based on a hint in the popular book, which may or may not have been injudiciously developed by Marlowe himself. The introduction of the Seven Deadly Sins, favourite characters of mediaeval imaginative art, seems to me both appropriate and in its way effective. On the other hand, Faustus' endeavours to make practical use of his new powers are extremely depressing to the modern reader, whatever they may have been to an

[1] See v. d. Velde, p. 38 *seqq.*; Collier and Dyce; and Ulrici, who seems to consider that Dekker improved the play.

Elisabethan audience. They commence (this however off the scene) with an aërial voyage by Faustus to view the secrets of astronomy, and his return to earth 'to prove cosmography;' but these scientific researches are speedily exchanged for a series of doings at Rome and at the imperial court in Germany, which occupy the third and fourth acts of the play. The incidents here consist in a display by Faustus of his magical power, partly in practical jokes, impartially played upon Pope and horse-dealer, partly in the summoning up of the dead (Alexander and his Paramour). Our interest only revives in the fifth act, when Faustus, at the request of some students at Wittenberg, calls up the vision of fair Helen—the same figure as that which has so mysterious a significance in the *Second Part* of Goethe's *Faust*. The lines in which the magician addresses the beauteous apparition are well known as a passionate strain of sensuous poetry. Then, after the climax, comes the catastrophe, which is presented with great dramatic force. The anxious students and the Angels Bad and Good prepare us for the end—and then, as the hand of the clock slowly moves on to the midnight hour ('*O lente, lente, currite noctis equi*'), Faustus tremblingly awaits his certain doom. When it has been wrought, the students reappear, and undertake with pathetic fidelity to bury their master's mangled limbs. As they go out, the Chorus enters, and in lines of great beauty preaches the simple moral of the tragedy. For the moral is simple enough, that 'unlawful things' are to be wondered at but not practised; yet it had its meaning for Marlowe's age[1], and for Marlowe's mind. His age believed that there were such possibilities of temptation as those before which Faustus succumbed; and to his mind the temptation of tampering with the inscrutable was doubtless a real one. No solution of the problem is proposed, or even hinted at; this was beyond both the poet and his times; but there is a subjective as well as an objective significance in his conception

[1] See *e.g.* Ralegh's section 'Of the Divers Kinds of Unlawful Magic' in his *History of the World*, Bk. I. chap. xi.

of his subject, though his treatment of it is crude, and his endeavour to work it out dramatically (whatever be the nature of the interpolations in the play) is imperfect.

The Jew of Malta (1588–90).

The third of Marlowe's tragedies (if the order assumed be correct) is as a literary work superior to its predecessors. The popularity of *The Jew of Malta*[1], however, was doubtless not primarily due to the literary merits modern criticism is able to recognise in it, but was rather the consequence of the extreme distinctness of its principal character. Whatever may be thought of the extraordinary accumulation of villanies perpetrated by the hero, the construction of the plot is extremely ingenious, and, notwithstanding its elaborateness, singularly clear and intelligible. Though the action rises from startling to more startling effects, a climax is reserved to the last. And in form the play deserves high praise; for the vigour and ease of its versification are alike remarkable.

The Prologue to the play is spoken by Machiavel. Of course this personage (the historical Machiavel had been dead since the year 1527) is, as the allusion to his having inhabited the body of 'the Guise' now dead shows, intended to have a typical significance only[2]. 'Machiavel' introduces

[1] It was repeatedly produced; and acted with a special prologue and epilogue before the King and Queen in 1633. It is frequently referred to in contemporary literature; and Gosson in his *School of Abuse* exempts it, together with a few other plays, from the general blame to which he subjects dramatic pieces.

[2] The interest taken in Macchiavelli by English writers was curiously great, if we may judge from the numerous references made to him and his writings, in and out of season. Doubtless it had been fed by the publication in English (in 1537) of the *Vindication* (see *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. i). I have traced the occurrence of allusions to him through a large number of our dramatists. Proverbial use is made of his name in plays treating of events before his time; see 1 *Henry VI*, act v. sc. 4: 'Alençon! that notorious Machiavel;' and cf. Steevens' note citing a passage from *The Valiant Welchman*, where Caradoc (Caractacus) is unreasonably enough bidden to 'read Machiavel;' also 3 *Henry VI*, act iii. sc. 3, where 'Machiavel.' is substituted (by Shakspere?) for 'Catiline.' He is referred to in the *Merry Wives*, iii. 2; in Greene's *James IV* (where 'annotations upon M.' are found in the pocket of the villain Ateukin); in Nash's *Will Summer's Last Will and Testament* (where it is said that 'the art of murder Machiavel hath penn'd'); in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (ii. 2), and in his *Magnetic Lady* (i. 1). Ben Jonson, as a passage in his *Discoveries* proves, had read the author whose name his age was

the Jew of Malta as one whose wealth had not been amassed 'without my means,'—in other words, the villain with whom the play is concerned is no common villain, but a politic schemer acting on a well-considered system; and Barabas fully redeems the promise thus made on his behalf; one of his speeches at least (act v. line 117 *seqq.*) has something like the true ring of the *Principe* itself, by which Macchiavelli's name was chiefly known to the foreign world.

This play is so remarkable, both on its own account and because of the comparison which inevitably suggests itself with Shakspere's *Merchant of Venice*, that it may be well to indicate briefly the nature of its plot. Barabas is discovered at the outset counting his wealth, when at the height of his prosperity as a merchant of Malta. But the rulers of the island, the Knights of St. John, being suddenly called upon by a Turkish force to pay a heavy out-standing tribute, the expedient occurs to them of making the rich Jews pay the money, and thus free the island from the danger threatening it. Every Jew is to surrender half his wealth; if he refuses, he is straight to become a Christian; and if he declines this, he is to lose the whole of his property. Barabas having refused both the first and the second demand, is sentenced to the third penalty and apparently reduced to beggary, his house being at the same time converted into a nunnery. He has however in this house concealed a large part of his wealth; and the expedient occurs to him of making his daughter Abigail feign to ask admission into the nunnery as a Christian convert, so as to secure for him his secret hoard. The device succeeds; but

so fond of evokin . I beg pardon for this long note; but it is interesting to observe with what tenacity popular literature clings to personified conceptions. Happily Englishmen have done something for the memory of the great Italian besides helping to keep alive an oblique view of it; the English visitor to Florence learns with pride that the monument to Macchiavelli in the Church of Sta. Croce was raised by a subscription set on foot (in 1787) by an Englishman (Earl Cowper).—To return to dramatic fiction, it is by the bye curious that Goethe in his *Egmont* should have thought fit to give the name of Macchiavelli to Margaret of Parma's secretary,—of course a gigantic anachronism, had there been any intention on Goethe's part to indicate more than a type of the policy which is represented by the character in question.

a complication arises from the circumstance of two young nobles of the island being enamoured of Abigail, who returns the love of one of them, the governor's son. Barabas persuades her to inveigle the other by pretending to return his passion; and by sending forged challenges to the rivals as from each to each, stirs up a quarrel between them which ends in their killing one another. Filled with anguish and remorse, Abigail confesses to a friar her connivance in her father's murderous scheme, and dies. Barabas hereupon contrives to rid himself both of the inconvenient friar, and of another monk, by feigning a desire to become a Christian, inviting both the monks into his house, killing the one and making the other believe himself guilty of the deed. Having again become rich, he seems likely to reap the reward of his ingenuity, when he is betrayed by the accomplice of his misdeeds, a rascally Turkish slave, whose services he had secured on the strength of his evil looks and antecedents. This Ithamore having betrayed all to a courtesan, who reveals the villanies of Barabas to the governor, the Jew (not, however, before he has managed to take vengeance by poison on those who had ruined him) is thrown over the walls as a dead man. But his career is not yet at an end. The Turks are again besieging Malta; and he (who has only feigned death) becomes their guide into the fortress, having been promised the governorship in case of success. The citadel is taken; governor and people are in his hands; and he is master of everything. But his politic cunning now suggests to him the necessity of making friends with his former foes; he therefore proposes to give to the departing Turks a farewell banquet, at which he will contrive to put them all to death. Thus he will assure to himself the gratitude of the Christians, remain governor, and be secure of the future as well as of the present. The Christians pretend to fall in with this Macchiavellian scheme,—but only in order to catch the Jew in his own trap, of which he has revealed the secret. Thus, instead of the Turkish leaders being crushed by the fall of the banquetting-room, Barabas alone is precipitated into a cauldron of fire held in readiness beneath;

and, foiled at last, expires with a curse, of which it is sufficient to state that it very adequately marks the conclusion of the play.

It has not escaped the observation of critics, that in this work the first two acts are greatly superior in execution to the remainder. Not that the play in the slightest degree abates either in rapidity of dramatic movement or in vigour of language in its latter part; but the colouring grows much coarser, the human element in the character of Barabas is altogether lost sight of, and if the story becomes more striking, its execution becomes less pleasing. I doubt whether the extraordinary dialogue in which Barabas secures the services of Ithamore, by giving him an insight into his own character and intentions, is to be taken to imply that Barabas really has been all he says he has been—in short a very fiend. But he certainly acts up to this self-drawn sketch in what follows; and as he is no longer sinned against as well as sinning, we lose all those elements of sympathy with him which the earlier part of the play had allowed to operate. Of the remaining characters, Ithamore, though very coarsely drawn, is a most effective picture of the basest kind of villain; the friars are satirical pictures of monkish selfishness and debauchery, at which it is easy for us to shake our heads,—but we should remember how the times encouraged an author to present such pictures to an applauding audience[1].

The Jew of Malta and the Merchant of Venice.

On the relation between Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* and Shakspere's *Merchant of Venice* it has been observed by Mr. Dyce, 'That Shakspere was well acquainted with this tragedy cannot be doubted; but that he caught from it more than a few trifling hints for the *Merchant of Venice* will be allowed by no one who has carefully compared the

[1] Ithamore has some resemblance to the Moor in Schiller's *Fiesco*.—In *Faustus*, Mephistophiles first appears in the habit of a monk. Without adducing other examples, I may remind readers of Spenser that Idleness appears in the *Faëry Queen* as a monk (i. 4. 19) and the Devil himself as a hermit (i. 1. 29). It has been pointed out by Schlegel, how Shakspere, when introducing monks, invariably dwells on the nobler aspects of their life and duties. His *King John* omits the ribald scene descriptive of the plunder of Swineshead Abbey in *The Troublesome Raigne*.

character of Shylock with that of Barabas.' (Now, between these two characters there is doubtless a very marked difference;) but that the two plays are, so far as their main subject is concerned, essentially written in the same spirit, I cannot hesitate in affirming. It is, I am convinced, only modern readers and modern actors who suppose that Shakspere consciously intended to arouse the sympathy of his audience on behalf of the Jew. The sympathy which, notwithstanding, is aroused, is in truth merely the adventitious result of the unconscious tact with which the poet humanised the character. In both Shakspere's and Marlowe's plays the view inculcated is, that on the part of a Jew fraud is the sign of his tribe, whereas on the part of Christians counter-fraud, though accompanied by violence, is worthy of commendation. This I cannot but regard as the primary effect of the whole of either play; but just as Shakspere, in working out character and action, could not fail incidentally to indicate his consciousness of a counter-argument *ad Christianos*, so Marlowe puts into the mouth of Barabas the following plea in defence of his conduct:

> 'It's no sin to deceive a Christian.
> For they themselves hold it a principle:
> Faith is not to be kept with heretics;
> But all are heretics that are not Jews;
> This follows well.'

Apart, however, from the much grosser developement of the evil tendencies of the Jew in Marlowe, the caricature (for such it is) of Barabas is in general far more coarsely drawn than the character of Shylock in Shakspere; and there are several passages in the earlier play showing that in external appearance Barabas was intended to be held up to the ridicule as well as to the disgust of the audience[1].

[1] I am not aware of any instance in an old mystery in which the character of Barabbas has the comic touches which are said to have been given to it at Oberammergau in earlier performances (they had been removed when I witnessed the play). But the name was at all events the most hateful that could have been chosen.—Marlowe's Barabas was rendered grotesque and hideous on the stage by means of a false nose, which is repeatedly referred to in the piece, also (as Dyce points out) in Rowley's *Search for Money*, as 'the artificiall Jewe of Maltaes nose.'—By the bye, it is odd that Barabas, who is learned enough to quote Terence ('Ego mihimet sum semper proximus'),

As to other resemblances, I will not dwell on the similarity of the situation between father and daughter in the two plays, which is essential to the conception of either. But it seems worth while to enumerate certain passages too closely approaching one another to have done so by accident, which have occurred to me in reading Marlowe's play:

Jew of Malta.	*Merchant of Venice.*
Act I. Sc. 1.	Act I. Sc. 3.
First appearance of B. He enumerates his argosies.	First appearance of S. He enumerates the argosies of Antonio.
Ib.	*Ib.*
'These are the blessings promised to the Jews, And herein was old Abraham's happiness,' &c.	Passage about Jacob, with a reference to Abraham, ending: 'This was a way to thrive, and he was bless'd; And *thrift* is blessing, if men steal it not.'
Act I. Sc. 2.	Act IV. Sc. 1.
'You have my goods, my money, and my wealth, &c. . . . you can request no more' (Unless you wish to take my life).	Greatly improved in Shylock's speech: 'Nay take my life and all,' &c.
Ib.	Act I. Sc. 3.
'What, bring you Scriptures to confirm your wrongs?'	'The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.'
Act II. Sc. 1.	Act II. Sc. 8.
'Oh my girl, My gold, my fortune, my felicity. . . . . . . Oh, girl, oh, gold, oh, beauty, oh, my bliss.'	'My daughter!—O my ducats!—O my daughter! . . . . . . Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter[1]!'
Act II. Sc. 2.	Act II. Sc. 5.
Barabas and Slave (against hearty feeders in general).	Shylock and Launcelot Gobbo.

should forget himself into a Christian oath ('Corpo di Dio'). This is again worthy of a mystery.

[1] There is a strong resemblance to both these passages in Ben Jonson's *The Case is Altered*, act v. sc. 2.

The number of these parallel passages might be perhaps increased[1]. They prove, as it seems to me, conclusively that Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* was present to Shakspere's mind when he wrote his *Merchant of Venice*. Yet the transforming power of his genius is evident in this as in almost every instance where he made use of the labours of his predecessors. The artistic difference between the plays needs no comment. The psychological distinction in the conception of the two principal characters lies, not in the nature of the elements out of which they are compounded—avarice, cruelty, revengefulness, with no softening element but that of paternal love, and this only till it is quenched in the sense of a daughter's desertion—but in the way in which these elements are combined. The art of Shakspere is immeasurably superior to that of Marlowe in not allowing either avarice or lust of vengeance to attain to such a pitch in his Jew as to take the character out of the range of human nature. In contrast with the unrelieved blackness of Barabas, the character of Shylock remains both truly human and within the limits of dramatic probability. A comparison of the last three with the first two acts of the *Jew of Malta* indeed suggests that haste of execution was the chief cause which prevented Marlowe from achieving a character instead of a caricature; but it is certain that while he had in this instance provided himself with the

[1] See several others (some not very striking) in Waldron's edition of Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, Appendix, p. 209 *seqq.*; among them the following speech of Barabas, to which I need not supply the Shaksperean parallel:

> 'I learn'd in Florence how to kiss my hand,
> Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
> And duck as low as any barefoot friar.'

It may be added that the passage in the *Jew of Malta*,

> 'What sight is this? my Lodovico slain!
> These arms of mine shall be thy sepulchre,'

doubtless suggested one in *Henry VI*, Part III, act ii. sc. 5; and the beautiful simile,

> 'But stay: what star shines yonder in the east?
> The loadstar of my life, if Abigail,' &c.,

cannot have been far from Shakspere's memory when he wrote the still more beautiful passage in *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 2. These two similarities are pointed out by Dyce.

finest opportunity for drawing an original character, his genius proved unequal to persevering in the accomplishment of the task.

The Massacre at Paris (1590 *circ.*).

Of the *Massacre of Paris* (of which only a single early edition exists, in a corrupt condition and without date) it is unnecessary to say much; for few will be found to differ from the judgment which, after making every allowance for the condition of the MS., pronounces this the very worst of Marlowe's dramas. Its interest for us mainly consists in the evidence which it furnishes as to what an English Protestant of the year 1590 or thereabouts thought of the Massacre, its authors and abettors, and in general of the principal personages of French and European politics—and as to what he thought it would be acceptable to an English popular audience to hear about them. Historians are likely, if judging with sobriety and accuracy, to take a different view of Catharine de' Medici from that which Marlowe offers, as well as to display less sympathy for the fate of Henry III, who was perhaps the most miserable member of a miserable brood, but who, it must not be forgotten, had been Elisabeth's suitor (Marlowe accordingly makes him send his dying salutations to England's Queen). Henry's death, with which the tragedy closes, had only taken place in 1589, so that the event must have been very fresh in men's remembrances. Carefully worked out, the subject as conceived by Marlowe might have been productive of a very powerful dramatic effect [1],—resembling that of an Æschylean trilogy; for it should be observed that it is rather the consequences of the Massacre than the Massacre itself (which occupies the first act, and is therefore the starting-point, not the catastrophe, of the drama) which constitute the real subject of the play. Its central figure is Guise, with the Queen-Mother in the background; and as Marlowe loved to paint black in black, he was not likely to forego the opportunity of presenting on

[1] Webster, whose genius the subject well suited, appears to have composed a play on it called *The Guise*, or the *Masaker of France*. Collier, iii. 101. A *Duke of Guise* was entered on the Stationers' books as by Henry Shirley; and Lee produced a compound *Massacre of Paris* in 1690.

the English stage a monster of the deepest hue. From the beginning, where he procures from an 'apothecary' a pair of perfumed gloves with which to poison the old Queen of Navarre, down to his dying exclamation,

> 'Vive la Messe! perish Huguenots!
> Thus Caesar did go forth, and thus he dies—'

there is no redeeming feature about the Guise; and in one passage ('Religion! O *Diabole!*' &c.) it is suggested that he is a hypocrite as well as a fanatic. But though there is considerable vigour in Guise's speeches, Marlowe has not sought, as Shakspere did in his *Richard III*, to account psychologically for the unredeemed blackness of his hero. The succession of scenes is far too rapid and breathless to allow of any attempt to work out character in this or in any other of the figures of the play[1].

Edward II (1590 *circ.*).

But the drama of Marlowe's which seems to me entitled to the highest and least qualified tribute of praise is his historical tragedy of *Edward II*[2]. It is to be regarded as marking a distinct progress in the developement of a species of dramatic literature of which we noted an earlier step in Bale's *Kynge Johan*. Already Peele's '*Famous Chronicle History of Edward I*,' to be noticed below, which though not printed till 1593, had doubtless been acted several years previously, shows a considerable advance towards the emancipation of the historical drama from being a mere reproduction of the chronicles on which it originally leant; and whoever was the author of the two plays from which the *Second* and *Third Part* of *Henry VI* were elaborated (viz. the *First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, and *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*), and whatever may be their relation to Marlowe's *Edward II*, they exhibit a further advance towards the ultimate perfection of the historical drama. That either Marlowe, in his *Edward II*, borrowed a series of striking passages from these

[1] The application of the term 'Puritans' to the French Protestants, which occurs more than once in this play, may be thought worthy of notice.

[2] Of this play a separate edition has recently been published by an accomplished and versatile German scholar, Dr. W. Wagner (Hamburg, 1871).

plays, or that, as has hitherto been more usually supposed, they borrowed from *Edward II*, is beyond dispute. Ulrici has sought to insinuate the former alternative. The whole question as to the authorship of these plays will be more appropriately touched upon in another place; here it may suffice to observe that, while as little inclined as Ulrici to regard Marlowe as the author of the two plays in question, I should be unwilling to believe him to have been the borrower of details. In some respects these plays undoubtedly exhibit an advance to which Marlowe as a historical dramatist has even in his *Edward II* failed to attain; they possess characteristics—above all that of sustained humour—to which in his known plays he always remained a stranger; while in pure tragic power *Edward II* infinitely surpasses them. But while Shakspere himself freely made use of passages in Marlowe, there is no instance with which I am acquainted in which Marlowe can be convicted of having borrowed from any other dramatist. Greene's famous charge against Shakspere has probably been misunderstood; but the attempt is to my mind unwarrantable to turn the tables on Marlowe[1].

The chronicle on which Marlowe based his play is Robert Fabyan's *Chronicle* or *Concordance of Histories*, which was

[1] See Ulrici, p. 69 *seqq*. The passages in question which the two plays are usually thought to have taken from Marlowe's *Edward II*, together with a similar parallel passage in the *Second Part* of *Henry VI*, will be found in Dyce's *Introduction*. One of the most remarkable of these had already been pointed out by Mr. Halliwell; see *Shaksp. Soc.'s Papers*, vol. i. pp. 5–7. I may add that no one will fail to be struck by the resemblance of a famous passage in *Romeo and Juliet*—

'Gallop apace, ye fiery-footed steeds,
. . . . . .
And bring in cloudy night immediately'—

to this in *Edward II*:—

'Gallop apace, bright Phœbus, through the sky,
And dusky night in rusty iron car,' &c.

(printed dusty by both Cunningham and Wagner). Of Shakspere's debt to Marlowe in passages of the *Merchant of Venice* I have already spoken; and I feel sure that the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* has her original in Marlowe's *Dido*. The closing line of the last-named play falls on the ear like the last line of Juliet's speech after drinking the potion.

written about 1485–90. It was the habit of this worthy chronicler, whose work has in general the stiffness and steadiness befitting the municipal office which he held, to insert at the division of the books of his work prologues and other pieces of verse[1]. One of these is the *Complaint of Edward II* (translated from a Latin poem, probably by William of Worcester), who, after the fashion of the personages in Boccaccio's *Fall of Princes*, followed afterwards by the authors of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, recites his own misfortunes. Other early poems on the same subject existed; in one of them[2] the corruption of the law-courts is attacked as well as the morals of the clergy; the Lord Chancellor of the time was Robert de Baldock, who plays a part in Marlowe's tragedy. The subject was therefore a familiar one to English literature, and could not have been more happily chosen[3]. Though Marlowe's play is based upon Fabyan's *Chronicle*, in the last act the author has certainly availed himself of a different source. And even in the earlier and larger part of the play, Marlowe by no means slavishly followed his authority; he was not so unconscious as has been thought of the necessity of finding dramatic motives, *i.e.* motives explaining incidents and acts by means of the course of the drama itself. Thus the idea of the passage, act i. sc. 4, where, in order to oblige Queen Isabel, Mortimer consents

[1] Among them seven pieces entitled the *Joys of the B. Virgin*, which were duly expunged on the republication of the work in 1542. The generally Protestant character of the changes in the post-Reformation edition of Fabyan are sufficiently instructive; he was made a Protestant in his grave; for the dislike of monastic institutions at which he occasionally hints is not to be regarded as a sign of heretical tendencies.

[2] In St. Peter's College Library, Cambridge; and edited by the late Archdeacon Hardwick for the *Percy Society*, (vol. xxviii). It may be regarded as to some extent a precursor of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*.

[3] A passage in Peele's *Order of the Garter*, referring to Edward's 'tragic cry,' is possibly a reminiscence of Marlowe. In the brief *History of Edward II* by Lord Falkland (printed in the *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. i), written in the reign of James I, but not printed till 1680 (apparently with the design of injuring the government), and containing some very judicious reflexions on Edward II's downfall, I think I also recognise allusions to Marlowe's play, in Gaveston being spoken of as 'the Ganymede of the king's affections,' and in the image of the fallen cedar, applied to the favourite.

to bring about the return of his enemy Gaveston, seems to be Marlowe's own invention; and thus Gaveston's return and the foundation of the guilty passion on the part of the Queen towards Mortimer are simultaneously accounted for. Elsewhere compression is applied as successfully as in this instance an addition is made.

The dramatic merits as well as the poetic beauties of *Edward II* are extremely great. The construction is upon the whole very clear, infinitely superior *e.g.* to that of Peele's *Edward I.* The two divisions into which the reign of Edward II naturally falls, viz. the period of the ascendancy of Gaveston and that of the ascendancy of the Spensers, are skilfully interwoven; and after the catastrophe of the fourth act (the victory of the King's adversaries and his capture) the interest in what can no longer be regarded as uncertain, viz. the ultimate fate of the King, is most powerfully sustained. The characters too are mostly well drawn; there is no ignobility about the King, whose passionate love for his favourites is itself traced to a generous motive[1]; he is not without courage and spirit in the face of danger; but his weakness is his doom. Misfortune utterly breaks him; and never have the 'drowsiness of woe' (to use Charles Lamb's expression), and, after a last struggle between pride and necessity, the lingering expectation of a certain doom, been painted with more tragic power. The scene in act iv, where the King seeks refuge among the monks of Neath Abbey, is of singular pathos; but it is perhaps even more remarkable how in the last scene of all the unutterable horror of the situation is depicted without our sense of the loathsome being aroused; and how pity and terror are mingled in a degree to which Shakspere himself only on occasion attains[2]. For the combined power and delicacy of treatment, the murder of Edward II may be compared to the murder of Desdemona in *Othello;* for the fearful suspense in which the spectator

[1] '*Y. M.* Why should you love him whom the world hates so?
Edw. Because he loves me more than all the world.'

[2] 'The death-scene of Marlowe's King moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted.' *Charles Lamb.*

is kept, I know no parallel except the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, but even here the effort is inferior, for in the English tragedy the spectator shares the suspense, and shares the certainty of its inevitable termination, with the sufferer on the stage himself. On the other characters I will not dwell; but they are not mere figures from the Chronicle. It may be worth while to note the skill with which the character of young Edward (afterwards King Edward III) is drawn, and how our good-will is preserved for him, even though his name is put forward by his father's enemies. Gaveston's insolence is admirably reproduced; he is a Frenchman, and has a touch of lightheartedness to the last, when he expresses his indifference as to the precise *manner* of his death:

> 'I thank you all, my lords: then I perceive
> That heading's one, and hanging is the other,
> And death is all[1].'

The imperious haughtiness of Young Mortimer is equally well depicted; in the character of the Queen alone I miss any indication of the transition from her faithful but despairing attachment to the King to a guilty love for Mortimer. The dignity of the tragedy is not marred by any comic scenes,—which is well, for humour is not Marlowe's strong point; but there is some wit in the sketch of Baldock as an unscrupulous upstart, who fawns upon the great, and gains influence by means of his ability to find for everything reasons, or, as his interlocutor terms them, *Quandoquidems*.

The play is written of course in blank verse, of a flowing as well as vigorous description; but rhymes are not unfrequent. The author's love of classical quotations finds

[1] One is reminded, *per contra*, of the famous anecdote of the nobleman who requested George III to allow him to be hanged in a gilt chain, the sovereign however replying that it should be done in 'the usual way.' In the play of *Sir John Oldcastle* there is an Irishman who insists upon being hanged in the Irish way. I cannot but notice with astonishment Ulrici's criticism on this speech of Gaveston's as 'the answer of a condemned robber or murderer, but not of the favourite, however unworthy, of a king.' Criticism and exegesis may, as Ulrici hints, be the weak point of English critics; a perception of humour is not always the strong point of their betters.

vent on several occasions[1]; and the number of classical allusions is extraordinary; besides Leander and Ganymede, who from different reasons were naturally in Marlowe's mind, Circe, the Cyclops, Proteus, Danaë, Helen, Atlas, Pluto, Charon, and Tisiphone, as well as Catiline and other historical parallels, are mentioned.

In conclusion, I see no necessity for dwelling on the resemblance which has naturally been pointed out between this tragedy and Shakspere's *Richard II*, except in so far as to suggest the narrowness of the limits to which this resemblance reduces itself. Charles Lamb observes that the 'reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in *Edward* furnished hints which Shakspere scarcely improved in his *Richard II*;' and I really do not know what is to be added to this observation. It will, however, be remembered that while Marlowe's play covers nearly the whole reign of Edward II, Shakspere treats of little more than the last two years of Richard II. But though Shakspere is thus far more emancipated from the mere historical facts than Marlowe, he cannot be said in this instance to have drawn his characters with greater fulness and detail than his predecessor. On the other hand, Marlowe's subject was in some respects the more promising; for the favourites of Edward II, or at all events Pierce Gaveston, have a distinct individuality, such as cannot be ascribed to Green, Busby, and Bagot. Again, while Marlowe was under no necessity of reconciling with other considerations the rebellious arrogance of Young Mortimer, Shakspere had to deal tenderly with his rebel-in-chief and usurper, Bolingbroke, as the progenitor of the Lancaster and Tudor kings. While therefore Shakspere's play is more elaborate,—as *e.g.* in the striking death-bed scene of John of Gaunt,—it can hardly be termed more effective than Marlowe's; while in the point as to which the comparison has above all to be applied, viz. the character and conduct of the two kings,

[1] The story of the ambiguous 'Edvardum occidere nolite timere bonum est' is apparently historical, or at least taken from a contemporary account by Thomas de la Moor, who was an eye-witness of Edward II's resignation. See Pauli, *Geschichte von England*, vol. iv. p. 303.

it is difficult to decide which of the two dramatists has the advantage. Shakspere's Richard is certainly, if the expression be permissible, more of a piece than Marlowe's Edward,—more consistently a man prone to reflexion and meditation, and without the capacity of action. But then Shakspere's object was more directly to trace Richard's fall to his errors as a cause justifying it; Marlowe's to exhibit in the fate of his Edward a calamity which tragically redeemed his earlier errors. In the closing scenes, accordingly, while Marlowe certainly never reaches Shakspere's grandeur and wealth of language and thought, he moves pity and terror far more strongly; and the death which is a climax in Marlowe, is, to speak comparatively, perfunctorily absolved in Shakspere.

Dido Queen of Carthage (pr. 1594).

In the tragedy of *Dido Queen of Carthage* (printed 1594) Marlowe was assisted, or his unfinished work was completed, by his former adversary Thomas Nash. Yet the play shows no signs of incompleteness, and few of unevenness. It is a very beautiful version of the oft-told tale[1] of Dido's love for Æneas, following Vergil with great fidelity, even so far as to quote, in salient passages, his Latin lines. But so infinite is a theme which like this gives an opportunity for the delineation of powerful emotions, that Marlowe, or Marlowe and his associate, have produced a dramatic poem which few will read without sympathetic interest. So far as the relations between the characters are concerned, the construction is neat and firm. Anna loves Iarbas; Iarbas loves Dido; Dido loves Æneas; Æneas loves glory, or, it would be more correct to say, his duty to his destiny better than Dido. The intervention of the gods is very successfully, and, so to speak, naturally, managed; Juno and Venus only interfere at critical moments; at the beginning is a sensuous but finely-written scene accounting for Juno's jealousy of Jupiter, near the close Hermes appears as the *deus ex machinâ* to cut the

[1] Besides an unprinted *Didone* by Leo X's nephew Alessandro de' Pazzi there were two early Italian tragedies on the subject, by G. Cinthio (Klein, v. 350) and by L. Dolce (*ib.* p. 399 *seqq.*). Jodelle's French *Didon se sacrifiant* was written by 1558 (Ebert, *u. s.* p. 113). The best-known later *Dido* is Metastasio's.

knot of a difficulty which admits of no solution. The comic character of the nurse, touched, like her betters, by the dart of Cupid, whom she has unconsciously been tending under the shape of Ascanius, irresistibly recalls Shakspere's more elaborate developement of the same kind of figure; and there are one or two other passages which remind us of Shakspere[1]. It is impossible to determine how much of this tragedy is Marlowe's, but I think in all probability very much. The vein of tenderness, though undoubtedly of a sensuous cast, which runs through the play (see in particular the moving scene in the cave), is that of the poet of *Hero and Leander;* and as *Dido* is after all, like all Marlowe's plays, only the work of a beginner, it is difficult to say at what degree of perfection this gifted poet might not have arrived in this direction, as well as in that which he more especially followed in the majority of his dramas.

Plays attributed to Marlowe.

Marlowe is likewise stated[2] to have 'had a hand' in the *Alarum for London, or Seige of Antwerp*, the editor of which play considers that Shakspere may have given some general superintendence to its composition, which he believes to have been the work of Marston[3]. To Marlowe has also been ascribed the authorship of the old *Taming of a Shrew*, remodelled by Shakspere. In this there are passages which seem plagiarisms from Marlowe; but its comic humour is foreign to the general bent of his genius. He has also been supposed (on the strength of one or two coincident passages, and a reference in the Prologue to

[1] So Dido's enumeration of her rejected suitors (cf. Portia's in the *Merchant of Venice*), act iii. sc. 2. These enumerations seem to have been popular; perhaps it was usual to apply them to Queen Elisabeth and her rejected suitors; and the parallel of Dido would be particularly appropriate to the Virgin Queen. The actor in *Hamlet* of course quotes his speech about the rugged Pyrrhus and Hecuba, not from Marlowe, but from some unknown play. The popularity of the story of Troy in literary circles is thus doubly attested, though probably Marlowe's play, like that from which the actor in Hamlet quotes, would not have 'pleased the million,' and have been 'caviare to the general.'

[2] By a MS. annotator in Mr. Collier's copy.

[3] See R. Simpson's edition of this play, forming No. I of a projected series entitled *The School of Shakspere.*

Tamburlaine) to have written the *Troublesome Raigne of King John, in two Parts*, which Shakspere remodelled in his *King John*. *Locrine* and *Titus Andronicus* have been likewise ascribed to him. All these suppositions may be dismissed; while the question as to the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie*, already adverted to above, will be briefly discussed below.

Lastly, the play of *Lust's Dominion*, formerly ascribed to Marlowe, was certainly not his. Of this fact there is sufficient proof in the circumstance, that the King Philip who dies in act i. is Philip II of Spain, and that the death of this monarch took place five years after Marlowe's own [1].

Marlowe's services to dramatic literature.

Having dwelt at the utmost length which I could permit myself upon the several plays attributable without doubt to Marlowe, I must be brief in my concluding remarks on his position as a dramatist. His services to our dramatic literature are two-fold. As the author who first introduced blank verse to the popular stage he rendered to our drama a service which it would be difficult to over-estimate. No innovation could have done more to preserve it from the danger of artificiality of form, which so readily leads to artificiality of matter, to which the drama is at all times peculiarly exposed. It is obvious that on the stage no form of rhymed verse can, except in isolated lyrical passages, prevail except the rhymed *couplet;* and it is the couplet in particular which leads to an antithetical arrangement of thoughts, which is of its essence a constant application of rhetorical practice. Thus rhymed couplets, while their use in special cases (such as the close of a speech or even any other peculiarly emphatic passage) will always commend itself, cannot without great danger both to the continuity and the naturalness of dramatic movement be employed as the ordinary form of dramatic verse. It is not too much to

His introduction of blank verse on the popular stage.

[1] See the Note in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. ii. p. 311. Several passages in the play are there shown to be founded on a tract descriptive of Philip II's death published in London in 1599. Collier, iii. 96, thinks this play was identical with *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*, for which payments were made in February, 1599–1600, to Dekker, Houghton, and Daye. Cf. Dekker's *Dramatic Works*, vol. i, *Introduction*, p. xii, *Note*.

say that their use in the French drama has contributed to mould the character of a whole developement, which continues to this day, of French dramatic literature, while their abandonment by the English popular stage had an equally decisive effect upon our own. In substituting blank verse, Marlowe at first thought it necessary to compensate by rhetorical efforts of another kind for the loss of immediate effect entailed by the change; but already in his later plays it is perceptible how unnecessary he had come to feel the substitution of rant for antithesis; and as the metre easily adapted itself to his hand, he recognised in practice its supreme merit of flexibility; so that whereas his earlier blank verse is monotonous, his later is varied in rhythm and cadence. The English drama never returned to rhyme, except in a phase of its history which is to be regarded as a conscious aberration from its national course; and it soon relinquished an endeavour forced upon it by the influence of foreign examples, finally renounced on this head by the most eminent of their English followers[1]. Altogether, it may well be doubted whether any literary innovation has ever been so rapidly and so permanently successful as this, in which the critically important step is associated with the name of Marlowe.

Passion his main dramatic characteristic.

His second service to the progress of our dramatic literature, though not perhaps admitting of so precise a statement, is even more important than the other. The genius of Marlowe, as it displays itself in the few works which have come down to us from the brief career which he ran as a dramatic author, is far from satisfying all the demands of his art. In construction, though by no means

[1] See below the remarks on Dryden's views and practice in this matter. Though I will not subscribe to the remark of the French critic quoted above (p. 110) from Mrs. Montagu, I confess that the ability displayed by good French actors in giving a continuity to their declamation of rhymed couplets without obscuring their metrical character has always struck me as a victory—not over nature, but over artificial obstacles of a *primâ facie* insuperable kind. Meanwhile, there are few English actors of the present day, and perhaps there is only one actress, who can declaim blank verse as if it were verse at all. The whole subject of Marlowe's versification has been exhaustively treated by Mr. Collier, in a most admirable passage of his *H. of D. P.*

unskilful and at times eminently successful, he is careless; and it is only rarely that he applies himself to the developement of character. It is not just to say of the author of *Edward II* that he never represents any dramatic conflicts except those between human impatience of all control and of all limits, and the control and the limits which the conditions of human life impose; it is not just to deny that he can move the springs of pity as well as of terror, and depict other passions besides those of ambition and defiant self-exultation. But during his brief poetic career he had not learnt the art of mingling, except very incidentally, the operation of other human motives of action with those upon which his ardent spirit more especially dwelt; and of the divine gift of humour, which lies so close to that of pathos, he at the most exhibits occasional signs. The element in which as a poet he lived was passion; and it was he and no other who first inspired with true poetic passion the form of literature to which his chief efforts were consecrated. After Marlowe had written, it was impossible for our dramatists to return to the cold horrors or tame declamation of the earlier tragic drama; the *Spanish Tragedy* and *Gorboduc* had alike been left behind. 'His raptures were all ayre and fire;' and it is this gift of passion which, together with his services to the outward form of the English drama, makes Marlowe worthy to be called not a predecessor, but the earliest in the immortal company, of our great dramatists.

George Peele (1552 *circ.*–1597 *circ.*).

His life.

GEORGE PEELE[1] was, it is said, a native of Devonshire, and was probably borne about 1552 or 1553. He was educated at Oxford, where he may have composed the commonplace *Tale of Troy* with which he afterwards sought the patronage of Lord Burghley. In any case he was, like Marlowe, well read in classical poetry, to the phrases and subjects of which he makes constant reference, though the love of it had not entered so deeply into his spirit as into that of

[1] *The Dramatic Works of George Peele, with Life*, by A. Dyce. Second edition. 3 vols., 1829–39. *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of R. Greene and G. Peele*, by the same editor. 1861.

Marlowe. His quotations too from Latin authors, though frequent, are not so frequent as those of his brother-poet. But he made the most of his Oxford career in after-life, and the 'Master of Arts' is duly appended to his name at the close of many of his works. From Oxford he would seem, without any interval of importance, to have betaken himself to London, and to have commenced his career as an author. That the life which he led was one of sore straits on the one hand, and frequent excess on the other, can hardly be doubted; to the former he bears testimony himself in the touching lines in his well-known poem of the *Order of the Garter* (1593):

> 'I laid me down, laden with many cares,
> My bed-fellows almost these twenty years'—

as well as giving proof of it by the application for pecuniary aid to Lord Burghley, already mentioned. His love of jovial company and pleasure, on the other hand, is alluded to by Dekker in his tract of a *Knight's Conjuring*, where Marlowe, Greene, and Peele have 'got under the shadow of a large vyne;' Greene thought fit in his *Groatsworth of Wit* to include Peele among those needing a warning to mend their ways; and indeed he seems to have attained to a kind of proverbial notoriety as a loose liver. So much perhaps it is fair to gather from the fact that one of the foulest pamphlets of the age, a collection of coarse practical jokes leavened by an extremely small amount of wit, attaches its ribald anecdotes to his name[1]. That he is innocent of most or all of these 'jests' it is however only right to assume. Whether Peele was an actor as well as an author cannot be accurately determined; it would however seem that he never trod the public boards, though his services as a manager of plays were frequently required, at Oxford and elsewhere; and though he was certainly confident of his histrionic abilities[2]. In 1598 he is spoken of as dead.

[1] It has been edited for the Percy Society. The hero of the comedy of the *Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street*, in which one of 'Peele's jests' is dramatised, is George Pyeboard, i. e. George Peele, '*peel* signifying a board with a long handle, with which bakers put things in and out of the oven.' *Dyce.* Cf. a passage in *Bartholomew Fair*, act iii. sc. 1.

[2] See Collier's *Memoirs of E. Alleyn* (*Shaksp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841), p. 11.

The Arraignment of Paris (1584.)

The first work of any importance published by Peele appears to have been the *Arraignment of Paris*, represented at Court before Queen Elisabeth by the children of the Chapel Royal in 1584, and printed anonymously in the same year. It obtained for Peele from Nash the title of *primus verborum artifex*[1]. It is in many respects a remarkable work, and, though the earliest, by no means the least pleasing of its author's dramas. A regular drama it is in no sense, being rather something between a pageant and a masque. The idea of the piece is, so far as I am aware, original, and conceived with some ingenuity, so as to turn a familiar episode of mythology into an elaborate compliment to the Queen. After in the earlier part of the play we have gone through the well-known story of Paris and Œnone and the judgment of Paris between the contending goddesses, the novel element begins with the arraignment of Paris before Zeus and the tribunal of Olympus for having adjudged the apple of Ate to Venus. On the ground that the act was committed in the vicinity of a place sacred to Diana, the final judgment is committed to her hands; and she solves the difficulty by awarding the apple to none of the rivals, but to a gracious nymph 'whose name Eliza is' (whom Pallas with appropriate readiness of wit recognises to be the same as she 'whom some Zabeta call'). The passage in which Diana celebrates, and the other goddesses echo, the praises of the Queen, should be read both as representing the *ne plus ultra* of Elisabethan flattery (addressed to her before her face), and because it shows Peele at his best in the matter of form, smoothness of versification being by no means an invariable characteristic of his[2]. It should be added that among Peele's plays only this and its immediate successor are in rhyme (with the exception of the above and one or two other passages), and that it presents a great variety of metres, some of the lyrical passages in particular possessing great merit. Malone thought that in the episode between Colin and the

[1] Collier, iii. 191.

[2] Collier, iii. 204, however, describes Peele's blank verse as 'exhibiting much smoothness, but with a degree of sameness in the rhythm which fatigues the ear.'

cruel shepherdess Peele referred to Spenser and the Rosalind whose identity has so much puzzled commentators, and supposed Spenser to have revenged himself by stigmatising the envy of Peele as 'Palin' in his *Colin Clout;* but this is doubted by Todd. I mention the circumstance, as there seem to be in Peele's works not unfrequent reminiscences of Spenser, though he makes no reference—at least of a direct kind—to him in his graceful enumeration of poets in the *Order of the Garter*[1].

Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes (1584 *circ.*).

About the same time as the *Arraignment of Paris* Peele seems to have written his play of *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, his authorship of which is a late discovery of Dyce's. The discovery would however, I think, have well been spared by Peele's fame. This uninteresting play is based on some unknown romance—one of those queer tales of chivalry in which ancient and mediaeval times are jumbled together: the two heroes of the play, the sons respectively of the King of Denmark and the King of Suabia, meet at the court of Alexander the Great. The play, however, possesses some literary interest in the history of the drama,—firstly as being written in rhyme, the metre being that tedious jog-trot termed the common metre, the long vitality of which has always been to me a difficult though not an unaccountable phenomenon. The other point is more curious. The comic character of the play, *Subtle Shift*, is no other than the Vice; and for an example of the transition from the Vice of the old moralities to such characters as the Shaksperean fools, no more instructive study could be found than this personage, unsavoury as his talk is from the moment when he first tumbles on the stage, as out of a ditch, and then runs off to look for one of his legs, which he fancies he has left behind him with its boot. This is, so far as I know, the earliest play in which a lady appears in the guise of a page; and there is a certain resemblance

[1] See *e.g.* the passage in *David and Bethsabe* noted by Collier, iii. 202. The name of the cowardly knight Brian *Sansfoy* in *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* must also be from Spenser. In the *Pageant borne before Woolstone Dixi* the figure of *Magnanimity* holds a place of honour, as in the *Faëry Queen* this is the virtue of virtues.—Spenser may be tacitly included in the reference to the 'feres' of Hobbinol (Gabriel Harvey) in the *Order of the Garter*.

between the pathetic situation of Neronis and that of Viola[1].

With Peele's multifarious efforts in other fields of poetry we have no concern here; but two pageants which he wrote for Lord Mayor's Days may be mentioned as having come down to us, bearing respectively the dates of 1585 and 1591. Of these the earlier (*The Device of the Pageant borne before Woolstone Dixi;* Sir Wolston Dixie was the Lord Mayor's name) is in praise of 'lovely London,' who appears as 'New Troy;' while the *Descensus Astraeae*, written for the mayoralty of William Web (of whose name the most is made in the device of the show), though also containing a very beautiful passage in honour of London, takes a bolder flight and celebrates the triumph of 'Astraea' over her enemies[2]. Peele had at an earlier date been employed to arrange a pageant for the contemplated meeting between Elisabeth and Mary Queen of Scots; and he may very likely have directed the shows which he celebrates in his poem of *Polyhymnia.*

Pageants (1585; 1591).

To return however to his dramatic works proper. The often-quoted *Groatsworth of Wit* shows that he was known as a dramatist in 1592; and to the year 1593 belongs one of the most remarkable of his dramas, for the full title of which he may not be responsible, though I may quote it as showing at once subject and treatment of the play in question. This is the *Famous Chronicle of Edward I, sirnamed Edward Longshanks, with his returne from the holy land. Also the life of Lleuellen rebell in Wales. Lastly the sinking of Queene Elinor, who sunck at Charing-crosse, and rose againe at Potters-hith, now named Queenhith.* This work occupies a very noteworthy position in the progress of English tragedy; for it marks the transition from the Chronicle Histories, of which we met with an example in Bale's *Kynge Johan*, where elements of the morality are still present, to the Histories of Shakspere. It accordingly corresponds to Marlowe's *Edward II*, but is ruder in

The Chronicle of Edward I (1593).

[1] See the lines 'How can that tree but wither'd be,' &c.

[2] Astraea is of course Queen Elisabeth. Compare Sir J. Davies' *Hymns of Astraea.*

construction and vastly inferior in general execution. Indeed, it is little more than a series of scenes or episodes, derived mainly from Holinshed, and strung together without either care or art. The whole story about Queen Eleanor's wickedness, which is, to put it plainly, a malicious lie of the blackest description, seems to have no other source than a doggrel ballad ascribed to the reign of Mary[1]. If so, it was doubtless the hatred of the Spaniards and of everything Spanish provoked by the events of that reign which gave rise to this detestable invention, and which made Peele, who was no tender-tongued patriot[2], inclined to incorporate it into his play. Poetical merits the play possesses few, except in its first, which has been justly recognised as its finest, portion. The return of King Edward from the Holy Land is a striking incident strikingly represented; but there is no sequence worthy of the opening, as in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus. There is a large admixture of prose in this piece, especially in the Welsh scenes, which are insufferably tedious and trivial. Altogether, this play has a typical significance, but little intrinsic value.

The Battle of Alcazar (acted by 1591).

The *Battle of Alcazar*, published in 1594, had been acted as early as 1591; and there can be little doubt that it is by Peele, though it was printed anonymously, as it is full of his favourite phraseology. If we are led to compare *Edward I* with *Edward II*, the *Battle of Alcazar* naturally suggests a comparison with *Tamburlaine*, which it resembles in the extravagance of expression—indeed the rant—with which it abounds[3]. The most curious point about this play is its subject, which had apparently already been brought on the stage in a previous play[4]. Englishmen

[1] Quoted by Dyce.

[2] See his spirited *Farewell* (to the members of the ill-fated expedition of Norris and Drake in 1589).

[3] The *Battle of Alcazar* is quoted, by way of ridicule of its ranting style, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, act iii. sc. 1.

[4] So Dyce supposes from the lines in the *Farewell*:

'Bid theatres and proud tragedians,
Bid Mahomet . . . . . .
. . . . . *Tom Stukely*, and the rest
Adieu.'

Another play on the subject was printed in 1605, but probably acted earlier.

would hardly have taken a very warm interest in a battle ought to determine the possession of an African throne, had it not been for the part played in the event by a countryman of their own, whose strange character and adventures made him the subject of much contemporary curiosity[1]. Thomas Stukeley was in a sense the representative of some of the tendencies of his age; but they were the most extravagant of their kind, and were in his case exaggerated into something like madness. Peele, if as is supposed a Devonshire man, may have been specially interested in the life and death of this adventurer, who began his career as a cadet of an ancient family near Ilfracombe, and ended it by dying on the battle-field of Alcazar, in the company of three kings. The events of his career are set forth in the play, and the moral which it is made to preach is obvious enough, while the praises of Queen Elisabeth and of loyalty are easily introduced. A *Presenter* speaks a by no means unnecessary prologue to each act, and a series of dumb-shows further elucidates the course of events. There is vigour enough and to spare in the battle-scenes; and the hero's dying speech, though not quite true to its promise,

'Short be my tale, because my life is short'—

and giving in fact a final summary of his career, is not without a touch of pathos. But we are still in the infancy of the drama, and there is no attempt to seize the opportunity of drawing an original character instead of accumulating a mass of striking incidents.

The Old Wives' Tale (before 1595).

The *Old Wives' Tale*, printed 1595, acted perhaps some years earlier, might be passed by with a brief commendation of the homely humour of its exordium, and silent wonder at the labyrinthine intricacy of its main scenes, were it not for the fact of its connexion in subject with one of the noblest and loftiest productions of our poetic literature. There can be no doubt that Milton's *Comus* owes the suggestion of its central situation to this odd farrago. A brief examination of Peele's farce, or interlude

[1] He is mentioned in *Green's Tu Quoque* (printed 1614) as a type of martial spirit and liberality.

—for it is difficult to decide what name to assign to it—places this beyond doubt; and Todd has further illustrated Milton's acquaintance with Peele's works by a reference to the same play, as well as to *Edward I*, in another work of the same author[1]. The *Old Wives' Tale* begins with the entrance upon the scene of three merry companions, Antick, Frolick, and Fantastick, who have in their wanderings in the woods lost their way, without at the same time losing their good spirits. They are conducted by an old man (who appears with a 'lanthorn and candle,' and announces himself as 'Clunch the Smith') to his hut, where they are made welcome by the good-wife. She sends one of them to bed with her husband, and undertakes to entertain the two others with a merry winter's tale 'to drive away the time trimly[2].' The whole of this introduction is written with much natural freshness and humour, as indeed is the beginning of the old wife's tale, which, like the beginnings of many other narratives, is neither very clear nor very concise. By the time the old woman has involved herself and her hearers in a maze between what she remembers and what she forgets, her story is interrupted by the appearance of 'some that come to tell her tale for her.' In other words, from this point the 'tale' is no longer told but acted, the two Brothers, Sacrapant the conjuror (the son of the witch Meroe), Delia the enchanted lady, and a variety of other personages appearing in a swift and not always very perspicuously connected succession of scenes. A variety of comic characters is also introduced, among them Huanebango, who quotes Gabriel Harvey and ridicules his hexameters[3]; and the hero who makes an end of Sacrapant is Jack, the namesake and rival of the immortal Giant-Killer.

[1] *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence against Smectymnus.*

[2] Cf. Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, act ii. sc. 1.

[3] 'Phylyda, phylerydos, pamphylyda, floryda, flortos,
Dub dub a dub, bounce quoth the guns, with a sulphurous huff snuff,' &c.

One of the lines is actually taken from Harvey's *Encomium Lauri*, where it occurs as the second in the following exquisite couplet:

'Faine wod I crave, might I so presume, some further acquaintance.
O that I might? but I may not: woe to my destinie therefore.'

As to Harvey's quarrel with Greene *vide infra.*

Now, that Sacrapant, Delia, her Brothers, and Jack became in Milton's hands Comus, the Lady, her Brothers, and the Attendant Spirit, is open to no doubt, whatever further suggestions the author of *Comus* may have derived from Italian and other sources. Of the difference between the play of Peele and the poem of Milton it will suffice to say here, that it is the difference between a farcical extravaganza, not devoid of occasional touches of a true poetic fancy, and one of the loftiest, most sustained, and most refined of moral allegories in our own or any other literature. But as Milton was beyond doubt a reader of Peele, I cannot think that the expression, 'coincidences as regards the plan, the characters, and the imagery,' used by Mr. Masson[1] in discussing the origin of *Comus*, adequately represents the relation between Milton's sublime poem and Peele's fanciful creation.

The *Old Wives' Tale* seems to have been the last of Peele's plays published in his lifetime, though the date of his death is not known. It must however, according to the evidence of Meres, have taken place before or in the year 1598; so that the last work of this author which calls for notice, viz. *David and Bethsabe*, which was not printed till 1599, appeared after his death. His play of the *Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek*, which seems to be referred to in his *Farewell* to Norris and Drake and their companions (1589), is lost[2]. I entirely subscribe to Dyce's opinion, that *David and Bethsabe* is to be regarded as Peele's masterpiece. It is indeed the solitary work of Peele which can be said to rival the best dramatic works of Marlowe, though its characteristics are of a different kind from theirs. In construction, this play, as is indicated by its title, '*The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe. With the Tragedie of Absalon*,' resembles *Edward I.* It is in fact composed in the manner of a chronicle history, though the chronicle of course in this instance is the text of Holy Writ. Collier conjectures that

David and Bethsabe (by 1598).

[1] *Life of Milton*, i. 586.

[2] It was possibly only an adaptation of an earlier play, the *History of a Greek Maid*. See Collier, iii. 26.

as the protests against the immoral tendencies of the drama had been renewed about the time of the publication of this tragedy, this and other plays on scriptural subjects may have been intentionally brought before the public at this critical season. (We are reminded of Racine's endeavour to meet by his biblical dramas the religious tendencies to which Lewis XIV in his latter days had been awakened under the pious influence of his guide, philosopher, and mistress.) It must be allowed that Peele has treated a subject in many respects difficult and delicate with indisputable dignity and propriety, and that (except to Puritan ears) there is nothing that is really offensive in this play. Peele's was not a sensuous genius in his writings; and the earlier part of the play shows an unmistakeable sincerity of moral feeling. Of an endeavour harmoniously to develop character, on the other hand, there is not much evidence; and a great error of dramatic feeling is committed by the introduction of the scene in which David makes Urias drunk. The resemblance between this and a well-known episode in *Othello* will not fail to strike the reader; nor can it be said with justice that the situation is at all coarsely treated by Peele; but the situation is in itself a mistake; for Urias is a character for whom the sympathies of the audience have been engaged, and who should accordingly be in no wise subjected to degradation.

In form this is the most advanced of Peele's plays, while in construction there are still elements which remind us of the earlier drama, such as the chorus introducing the several acts. The blank-verse, though it may labour under the defect of a rather monotonous cadence,—the *caesura* being very generally at the same point in the line,—is upon the whole to be described as fluent and agreeable, and occasionally, as in the striking chorus introducing the powerful simile of the raven[1], rises to great beauty of expression.

Peele's merits as a dramatist.

Peele, as is shown by the great variety of non-dramatic pieces of which he was the author, was willing to turn his hand to any literary labour; and doubtless he dissipated much of his creative energy by constant production. I have

[1] 'O proud revolt of a presumptuous man,' &c.

not however scrupled to dwell upon his dramatic efforts at comparative length; for it is obviously rather with a career such as Peele's, prolonged to the period of ripe manhood, than with a life such as Marlowe's, nipped in the bud of its literary promise, that we should compare the poetic developement of the greatest of all the Elisabethan dramatists. When every allowance has been made for the position which Peele chronologically occupies (and yet it should be remembered that he was probably born only eleven years before Shakspere), as well as for the literary training of which he could avail himself (yet he was, and was well aware that he was, a Master of Arts of a University), it must be confessed that the difference between this the most productive of Shakspere's dramatic predecessors and Shakspere himself, merely from the point of view of dramatic art, is enormous, and will be more startling to those who compare the productions of the two as a whole, than to those who content themselves with placing passages or fragments of the one in juxtaposition with the works of the other. I am inclined to think that the merits of Peele have been overrated, and that the degree to which he remained unemancipated from the condition in which he found English dramatic art has been underestimated. His verse, notwithstanding the praises which have been bestowed upon it, seems to me in general more rugged and irregular than that of Marlowe, though his gifts of versification were unusual; his power of construction was never very arduously exerted; and he certainly never gave much time or attention to the careful delineation of character. Even so, however, the vivacity of his fancy, the variety of his imagery, and the general versatility of his genius, entitle him to honourable notice among our Elisabethan poets; but in his case we have not, as in that of Marlowe, to speculate on the possibilities into which the promise of his earlier efforts might have developed; and though he is one of the most noteworthy among Shakspere's predecessors, Peele certainly neither is, nor ever could have become, one of his peers from any one point of view or under any one aspect.

Robert Greene (1550 or 1560 *circ.*-1592). His life.

ROBERT GREENE[1] was born at Norwich, about 1550 or 1560; at all events he did not take his degree of B.A. (at St. John's College, Cambridge) till 1578. In 1583 he proceeded M.A. from Clare Hall, and was in 1588 incorporated at Oxford, so that on some of his title-pages he calls himself 'utriusque Academiae in Artibus Magister.' Before this time he had visited Italy, Spain, and other parts of the continent. It is not certain whether he ever took holy orders, unless he was the Robert Greene who in 1576 was one of the Queen's Chaplains and was presented to the rectory of Walkington in Yorkshire; according to another account he was Vicar of Tollesbury, Essex, for a year only. He also seems at one time of his life to have intended to pursue the medical profession. His pamphlets *Never too Late* and *A Groatsworth of Wit* are both believed to contain autobiographical fragments in what has reference to the characters of Francesco and Roberto respectively. According to this evidence, Greene won his wife with difficulty, and was then unfaithful to her; and it was apparently after thus unanchoring himself from his home that he became a Londoner and lived by his pen. The date of his earliest publication was 1584; but of his dramatic works, of which five have come down to posterity, none was published till after his death, which took place in 1592. He seems occasionally to have appeared on the stage as an actor[2].

His prose tracts.

Greene's celebrity was derived at least as much from his prose writings as from his dramas. Thirty-five prose tracts are ascribed to him[3]. He too may be regarded as a follower of Lyly; but it is unnecessary to recall any of his compositions of this class, except *Pandosto*, or *the Triumph of Time* (1588), called in some later editions

[1] *The Dramatic Works of Robert Greene.* With some account of the Author, and Notes. By the Rev. Alexander Dyce. 2 vols., 1831. *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of R. Greene and G. Peele, &c.*, by the Rev. A. Dyce; 1861.

[2] The John Green who was famous in clowns' parts and who gave his name to the play of *Green's Tu Quoque*, in which he acted the part of Bubble, was of course a different person. A poet of the name of Thomas Greene, author of *A Poet's Vision and a Prince's Glorie* (1603), is likewise to be distinguished from the dramatist.

[3] See the list in Dyce.

Dorastus and Fawnia,—the novel on which Shakspere founded his *Winter's Tale*. It contains the entire plot of Shakspere's comedy, though some of the subordinate characters in the latter are Shakspere's additions (Antigonus, Paulina, Autolycus, and the Young Shepherd). It is written in the euphuistic manner, but not, so far as I have observed, very markedly so[1].

Greene's death overtook him—in the year 1592—in the midst of degradation and misery, and this too at a time when he was still young, for we must not too literally interpret his declaration in his *Farewell to Folly* (1591), that many years had bitten him with experience and that age was growing on[2]. He had however lived long enough to repent of his dramatic profession, without overcoming its jealousies. He left to his friends, for publication after his death, a record of his *conversion* in the form of a pamphlet entitled *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, in which he addresses friendly warnings to his associates Lodge, Peele, and Marlowe, and bitterly sneers at Shakspere as a vainglorious playwright and an unscrupulous plagiarist. The pamphlet was published in 1592 after Greene's death by Chettle (who in the same year himself vindicated Shakspere from the aspersions which he had thus helped to cast upon him), and long continued notorious[3].

A Groatsworth of Wit, etc.

A more touching memorial of his sins and sorrow than this venomous confession was the repentant letter addressed by Greene to his forsaken wife, which was afterwards appended to the *Groatsworth of Wit*. After his death, his memory was bitterly assailed by Gabriel Harvey, with whom he had quarrelled in his lifetime, attacking him in

[1] The greater part of it is quoted in Dyce's *Introduction*.

[2] Too much importance must not be attached to a poet's mention of his age. Thus Dekker speaks of himself as an old man when he can hardly have been more than fifty. (See Memoir prefixed to vol. i. of his *Works*, p. viii.) Gervinus has given similar examples from the seventy-third and other Sonnets of Shakspere. Readers of Coleridge will remember the touching lines *Youth and Age*, in which the poet, though then in truth only 38 years of age, speaks of himself as an old man. On the other hand, it is absurd to accuse Chaucer of having wilfully told a falsehood about his age in the opposite direction.

[3] See the allusions in Jonson's *Epicœne*, iv. 2.

his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*[1], and wounding him to the quick by calling him the son of a rope-maker. Gabriel Harvey's revenge was bitter. 'As Achilles,' says Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 'tortured the dead body of Hector, and as Antonius and his wife Fulvia tormented the lifeless corpse of Cicero, so Gabriel Harvey hath shewn the same inhumanity to Greene, who now lies full low in his grave.' Among the taunts which Harvey launched against Greene was the charge that he 'wrote for his living'!

Greene's life and death of typical significance.

Beyond all doubt moral weakness and its inevitable consequences, to which was probably added personal want, combined to render Greene's life a misery to himself. Even if his enemies' accusations be partially unfounded or exaggerated, we may regard him as a type of the extreme Bohemianism which was the curse of the group of writers to which he belonged. The account of his death is at once grotesque and terrible. In an illness brought on by a crapulous surfeit of 'Rhenish and red herrings' he was deserted by all his friends. Lingering out his last days with the help of a compassionate shoemaker and his wife, he lay in their house unvisited by any one but two women —one the mother of his bastard son. Shortly before his death, having given a bond to his host for ten pounds due to him, he wrote beneath it the following letter to his wife, —a different one, it need hardly be said, from that afterwards published: 'Doll, I charge thee by the love of our youth, and by my soules rest, that thou wilte see this man paide; for if hee and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streets.' This is the narrative, it is true, of his unforgiving adversary, who adds that Greene's dead body was, in accordance with his own request, crowned by his hostess with a garland of bays! His friends could say little in his defence; the ablest pamphleteer among the dramatists, Nash, made the attempt[2], but seems to have faltered in making it. Yet there is truth and wisdom in

[1] This pamphlet, as Mr. Collier has shown, was in substance taken from the old *Debate between Pride and Lowliness* (by Francis Thynn). See Introduction to *Debate* (reprinted in *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841).

[2] In his *Strange Newes, etc.* (1592), afterwards republished as *The Apologie of Pierce Pennilesse; or Strange Newes, etc.* (1593).

the question which he puts to the unhappy poet's enemy, and with which this reference—for it shall be no more—to a sickening picture of sin and its punishment may be fitly concluded. '*Why should Art answer for the infirmities of maners?*' Were it not that this question implies an indisputable though often overlooked truth, it were indeed better to turn away from the chapter of our literature which contains, together with the works, the lives of such men as Greene and Marlowe.

Orlando Furioso (acted by 1591).

Among Greene's plays the *Orlando Furioso* (certainly acted by 1591) is of course founded upon Ariosto, but the English adapter has dealt very freely with his original. The play is rather contemptuously described by Collier as one in which the author's object seems to have been 'to compound a drama which should exhibit an unusual variety of characters in the dresses of Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans, and to mix them up with as much rivalship, love, jealousy, and fighting as could be brought within the compass of five acts.' I am not however sure that this description conveys a correct impression; for the play is tolerably perspicuous in arrangement, and with the exception of certain passages (such as *e.g.* the dying speech of the wicked Sacripant, whose false devices are the cause of Orlando's madness), not signally extravagant in execution. The commencement, in which the several suitors of Angelica declare their love and describe their homes, is not ineffective; but the madness of Orlando is not, I think, depicted with much power. In the language of the play there is a great wealth of imagery, and the verse is fluent and pleasing. Latin as well as Italian quotations are inserted in the English text[1].

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (acted 1591).

The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (certainly acted in 1591) is a far more noticeable production. It is unequal in execution, and its serious conclusion (in which Friar Bacon repents him of his necro-

[1] Mr. Collier has printed in the appendix to his *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841) a unique theatrical relic, a large portion of the original part of Orlando, as transcribed by the copyist of the theatre for the actor (Alleyn himself), with the 'cues' regularly marked, according to the practice observed by theatrical transcribers down to the present day.

mancy) strikes me as uncommonly tame. But the magic of Friar Bacon and his monastic brother is hardly to be regarded as the essential subject of the plot. So far as this part of it is concerned, it seems to be founded on a prose-tract entitled *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*[1]. The more attractive part of the action however is concerned with the love of Prince Edward (I) for a keeper's daughter, the fair Margaret of Tresingham, a character which does not appear in the above-mentioned tract. Margaret's affections are secured by Edward's proxy wooer, the Earl of Lincoln,—a notion familiar to Elisabethan as well as to more recent poetry[2]. The scenes in the Suffolk village are written with a loving hand; there is a delightful air of country freshness about them, unknown to any of Greene's contemporaries or successors except one, and much idyllic beauty in the character of Margaret. We are then transplanted to Oxford, and introduced to the magic studies of Friar Bacon in his cell at Brasenose. The description of Oxford has been often quoted:

> '*Emperor.* Trust me, Plantagenet, these Oxford schools
> Are richly seated near the river side:
> The mountains full of fat and fallow deer,
> The battling pastures laid with kine and flocks,
> The town gorgeous with high-built Colleges,
> And scholars seemly in their grave attire,
> Learnèd in searching principles of art,
> What is thy judgment, Jacques Vandermast?'

To which Vandermast, a German 'philosopher' whom the Emperor has brought to Oxford to confound the wisdom of the English University, replies with an irreverent scepticism of which it is to be feared other German scholars have been guilty since his day:

[1] The extremely pleasing *Friar Bakon's Prophesie: a Satire on the Degeneracy of the Times* (printed 1604, and edited for the Percy Society by Mr. Halliwell, 1844), has no connexion with the story of the Friar and his brazen head except in its title, which was doubtless only adopted in order to give popularity to the poem. The old story-book must have long retained its popularity; 'Bungy's dog' is mentioned in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub* (1633), ii. 1.

[2] *e.g.* it occurs in *Henry VI* (Margaret and Suffolk), and under an aspect more resembling that of Greene's play in Longfellow's *Miles Coverdale*. In Dekker's *Satiromastix* the idea is, so to speak, inverted.

'That lordly are the buildings of the town,
Spacious the rooms, and full of pleasant walks;
But for the doctors, how that they be learned,
It may be meanly, for aught I can hear.'

However, his Teutonic arrogance, which in disputation and experiment completely overpowers Friar Bungay, is no match for Friar Bacon, whose magic art finally carries off the insolent German by means of one of the ghostly apparitions conjured up by himself. A very diverting comic character is Bacon's servant Miles, who is of the type of the Vice in the old moralities. He plays the fool unabashed by either living monarchs or supernatural phenomena, and in the end cheerfully consents to be carried off by a devil, on being given to understand that in the quarters for which he is bound he will find a lusty fire, a pot of good ale, a 'pair' of cards, and other requisites for a comfortable life. The play ends with a most gracefully conceived and truly poetic compliment to Queen Elisabeth, under the symbol of a flower which shall overshadow Albion with its leaves, until

'Apollo's heliotrope shall stoop,
And Venus' hyacinth shall vail her top;
Juno shall shut her gilliflowers up,
And Pallas' bay shall 'bash her brightest green;
Ceres' carnation in consort with those
Shall stoop and wonder at Diana's rose[1].'

The whole of this play is one of the most fascinating of our old dramas, though rather carelessly put together, and avoiding, or at least teaching after a very clumsy fashion, the moral lessons which its subject is suited to enforce.

Alphonsus King of Arragon (by 1592).

The *Comical History of Alphonsus King of Arragon* (printed 1599) is apparently only called comical because its ending is not tragical. The subject of this play has considerable resemblance to that of *Tamerlaine* (Tamerlaine's yoke of kings is fairly matched by Alphonsus' canopy of state, ornamented at the corners by three kings' heads); it is in fact merely a stirring narrative of a series of conquests, in this case unbroken. For a work of this

[1] 'Dian's bud' in the famous passage in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, if it refers to Queen Elisabeth, may have been borrowed from Greene's image. Cf. Halpin, *Oberon's Vision*, pp. 12–13 (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1843).

kind, the interest in which is epical rather than dramatic, *King Alphonsus* is most decidedly effective, and the action is so managed as to rise gradually in interest with the magnitude of the deeds of the hero. There is a noble confusion of the associations of various religious systems; and the charms of Medea are grotesquely intermingled with the oracles of Mahomet, communicated (in remembrance doubtless of Friar Bacon) through a brazen head, while the prologue and the connecting choruses are spoken by Venus, who both at the beginning and at the end of the play holds converse with the Muses. The stage-directions are very numerous, and instructive as to the simplicity of the arrangements whereby such a representation of battles upon battles as this play offers was managed; at the close we read: 'Exit Venus, or, if you can conveniently, let a chair down from the top of the stage and draw her up.' But the entire production is by no means unequal in execution to the stirring theme which it essays to treat.

James IV, etc. (by 1592).

A far more noteworthy play, and in execution I think upon the whole the happiest of Greene's dramas, is *The Scottish Historie of James IV, slaine at Flodden. Intermixed with a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oboram King of Fayeries* (printed 1598). The title is deceptive, for the fatal field of Flodden is not included in the drama, which ends happily by the reconciliation of King James with his Queen Dorothea. Indeed, the plot of the play has no historical foundation; James IV's consort, though of course she was an English princess, as she is in the play, was named Margaret, not Dorothea; and King Henry VII never undertook an expedition to avenge any misdeeds committed against her by her husband[1]. But though the play is founded on fiction, such as we may be astonished to find applied to a historical period so little remote from its spectators, it is very interesting; and, besides being symmetrically constructed, has passages both of vigour and of pathos. The story is in brief the passion of King James for Ida daughter of the Countess of Arran, to obtain whose

[1] The King of England is in the play named *Arius*, an appellation which I suppose is to be interpreted rather as the suffix than as the heresiarch.

hand he, at the suggestion of a villain called Ateukin,—a well-drawn character,—endeavours to make away with his Queen. Wounded by the dagger of the Frenchman Jaques, she however escapes; and assuming the disguise of a squire, remains for a time in concealment, attended only by her dwarf Nano. To avenge her wrongs, her father makes war upon her husband, whose design upon Ida has been frustrated by her marriage, and whose nobles and people have deserted him[1]. Queen Dorothea intervenes to reconcile her father and her husband, whom she forgives; so that, as I have said, all ends happily. The play, which is very well written throughout, is thus perspicuously and neatly constructed; and the opportunities presented by the plot for the drawing of real characters and the delineation of genuinely powerful and effective situations are not lost. The fine character of the chaste lady, Ida, reminds me of that of the Countess of Salisbury in the play of *Edward III*, in which I cannot help thinking that Shakspere had a hand.

But though the *Scottish History of James IV* is both effective in its serious and amusing in its comic scenes ('Slipper' is an excellent clown), Greene seems to have thought it necessary to give to it an adventitious attraction by what appears a quite superfluous addition. The title describes the play as 'intermixed with a pleasant comedy presented by Oboram King of Fairies;' but the 'pleasant comedy' in point of fact consists only of a brief prelude, in which Oberon and a misanthropical Scotchman named Bohan introduce the play as a story written down by the latter, and of dances and antics by the fairies between the acts, which are perfectly supererogatory intermezzos. The 'history,' or body of the play itself, is represented by a set of players, 'guid fellows of Bohan's countrymen,' before 'Aster Oberon,' who is the same personage as he who figures in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, though very differently drawn, if indeed he can be said to be drawn at all[2].

[1] A curious dialogue on the sins of the times between the Merchant, the Lawyer, and the Divine will be noted in act v.

[2] The *Midsummer Night's Dream* was probably not written till after Greene's

George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield (by 1592).

George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield (printed 1599), is now ascertained to be one of Greene's productions, of which it most decidedly has the distinctive note,—a freshness which one is tempted to call a native English freshness, of colouring. This delightful play breathes the spirit of the old ballads of the Robin Hood cycle[1], and is indeed founded partly on one of these, partly and mainly however on the old prose history of *George-a-Greene*, though the dramatist shifts the period in which the story plays from the reign of King Richard I to that of King Edward (I suppose III). The hero of the play is the valiant yeoman who gives it his name, the keeper of the pinfolds (or penfolds) belonging to the common lands about Wakefield, and the strongest and bravest man in England to boot. We see how by his valour and craft he quells single-handed the rebellion of the Earl of Kendal, and makes the Earl himself and his companions prisoners; how he then proves himself stronger than Robin Hood and his three merry men; and how finally he disdains all reward from the King save his good word to speed his suit with the father of his sweetheart Bettris. The latter part of the piece plays at Bradford, and much fun is made out of the local custom according to which the shoemakers cause every man who passes to vail his staff. To this custom the King himself, who in company with his royal Scottish prisoner visits Bradford in disguise to see George-a-Greene, consents for the sake of peace to submit. The play will be read with much pleasure, as a healthy and genial revival of popular traditions, very national in spirit, and light and pleasing in execution. The clown, Jenkin, is a diverting specimen of his kind.

This closes the list of the plays written by Greene alone; in *A Looking Glasse for London and England* (printed 1594)

death; but in any case the borrowing of this solitary feather can have nothing to do with the charge in the *Groatsworth of Wit.*

[1] George-a-Greene appears as one of Robin Hood's merry men in Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd.* Munday, in his *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington* (iii. 1), mentions George-a-Greene and 'wanton Wakefield's Pinner' as two distinct personages; and Henslowe (see Collier's note *ad loc.*, *Five Old Plays*, p. 49) enters *George-a-Greene* as one piece, and the *P. of W.* as another. But this may be mere accident.

Greene and Lodge's Looking Glasse for London and England (by 1592).

he, as already stated, co-operated with Lodge. This play begins with a picture of Rasni king of Nineveh in all his pride after the overthrow of Jeroboam. At an early stage there appears, brought in by an angel, the prophet 'Oseas,' whose task is to note the sins of Nineveh and preach from them a warning lesson to Jerusalem. But the warning is addressed not to Jerusalem only, but, as the title of the play has already apprised us, to London also[1]:

> 'London, look on, this matter nips thee near;
> Leave off thy riot, pride, and sumptuous cheer,
> Spend less at board, and spare not at the door,
> But aid the infant, and relieve the poor,
> Else seeking mercy, being merciless,
> Thou be adjudg'd to endless heaviness.'

Usury (a vice of which Greene clearly had some personal experience[2]), lust, and judicial corruption are exemplified, as well as directly commented upon. Then the Angel summons the prophet 'Jonas' to repair to Nineveh. His attempt to fly to Tarsus gives Hosea an opportunity for moralising on the presumption of prophets 'new inspired' and 'men of art.' But Jonah, after being thrown overboard in the storm, and swallowed and cast up by the whale, appears at Nineveh to preach repentance; Hosea, acting throughout as a kind of Chorus, applying the moral to London. At the close King Rasni accepts the warning, and the play ends with a final address by Jonah to London, and a fulsome compliment to Queen Elisabeth, whose prayers are said alone to defer the plague which otherwise would fall. This dramatic apologue is curious as con-

[1] Compare the frequent use of the term *Mirrour* as the title of a book, especially among the old French writers. Warton, *Hist. of Engl. Poetry* (Section xlviii, on the *Mirroure for Magistrates*).

The *Seige of Antwerp* has for its first title *A Larum for London*.—Gifford says (note to *Every Man out of his Humour*, act ii. sc. 1, that there is no puppet-show of which our old writers make so frequent mention as that of Nineveh. Cf. *Bartholomew Fair* (v. 1): 'Jerusalem was a stately thing, and so was Nineveh, and the City of Norwich, and Sodom and Gomorrah.' See also Marston, *The Dutch Courtezan* (iii. 1).

[2] 'I borrowed of you forty pounds, whereof I had ten pounds in money, and thirty pounds in lute-strings.' This substitution of 'commodities' for cash, of which Thackeray used to make so much fun, is described by Ben Jonson in *The Alchemist*, (iii. 2) and elsewhere.

taining, after the fashion of a morality, a strange mixture of the serious and the comic; the clown of the piece is called Adam, and there is much life in the comic scenes, while there is considerable fire and richness of imagery in some of the verse of the dialogue, apart from the solemn directness of the passages which (for Hosea takes no part in the action) may be described as the chorus of the play.

Greene a victim of plagiarism.

That Greene had no share in the old plays on which the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI* were founded will, I think, be evident to any one capable of judging of difference of styles; and it is unnecessary to waste further words on the supposition. Greene's assertion as to his having undergone literary robbery, is however borne out by his panegyrist 'R. B.,' who thus spoke of him after his death:

> 'Greene is the pleasing object of an eie:
> Greene pleasde the eies of all that lookt vppon him.
> Greene is the ground of everie Painters die:
> Greene gave the ground to all that wrote vpon him.
> Nay more the men that so Eclipst his fame,
> Purloynd his Plumes, can they deny the same?'

At the same time Greene was himself not guiltless of at least one appropriation of the same kind[1].

His reputation.

The unusual oscillations which the reputation of Greene as a dramatist has undergone, and which are perhaps not even yet at an end, admit of easy explanation[2]. That those whom in his *Groatsworth of Wit* he, from whatever motives, held up as examples of a profligacy which he had shared, should have had in return scant love to spare for his memory, is not wonderful. With the pedantic champion of the learned clique who looked down with contempt upon all play-writers he was at war; and his adversary could not forgive him even in the grave. On the melancholy lesson which is taught by his career I have already

[1] Vide *ante*, p. 216, note 1.

[2] Greene, whose plays certainly offer the *lightest* reading among our earlier dramas, seems to have been little read already in Ben Jonson's time. So at least it is insinuated in *Every Man out of his Humour*, act ii. sc. 1: 'She does use as choice figures in her ordinary conferences, as any be in the *Arcadia*.' *Carlo*: 'Or rather in Greene's works, *whence she may steal with more security*.'

touched; but the remembrance of its errors should not affect the judgment of posterity upon his genius as a dramatist. In this respect justice has hardly been always done to Greene; and upon the whole, his merits as a dramatist have perhaps been as much underestimated as those of Peele have been overvalued. Greene's inventiveness is very remarkable; he treats a large variety of materials with great, and often exceedingly happy, freedom, displaying a truly romantic spirit in the width of his range and in the successful audacity of his choice of subjects. In gracefulness and fluency of versification he assuredly surpasses Peele, who can have but slightly preceded him in his first efforts as a writer of blank verse. In humour he is infinitely the superior of Marlowe. Apart therefore from the productivity and versatility which Greene displays in other fields besides the drama, he ranks high among the predecessors of Shakspere in the drama itself. And though we may be indifferent as well as sceptical as to the nature of the debt with which Greene charged Shakspere, yet it ought not to be forgotten that a different debt was assuredly owed by the younger and greater to the elder and lesser dramatist, who helped more than any poet before him to wing the feet, if I may use the expression, of the English dramatic Muse, to give freedom and lightness to her movements; whose genius was in the main without the pedantry from which neither Peele nor even Marlowe was wholly free; and many of whose dramas breathe in some degree that indescribable freshness, that air blown from over English homesteads and English meads, which we recognise as a Shaksperean characteristic, and which belongs to none but a wholly and truly national art.

His merits as a dramatist.

THOMAS LODGE was the son of a Lord Mayor, and apparently of ancient family. He was born in or near London about the year 1558, and educated at Trinity College, Oxford. It is perhaps hardly fair to conclude from the knowledge he displays of usurers and their dealings with young men, and from his remarks on the temptations incident to the life of a young student of the law, that the difficulties of his own existence began with his

Thomas Lodge (1558 *circ.* –1625). His life and literary labours.

entry at Lincoln's Inn. But it seems that his father left him out of his will, and that his mother, while bequeathing him part of her property, only intended him to succeed to the rest in case of his remaining what 'a good student ought to be.' He appears from the first to have renounced the pursuit of legal studies in favour of literature. When quite a young man he entered the lists of controversy as the defender of the liberal arts of poetry, music, and the drama against their asperser Stephen Gosson and his *Schoole of Abuse* (published in 1579). Lodge's pamphlet, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-plays*[1], was suppressed before publication, but a few anonymous copies had found their way into private circulation. It is not particularly interesting, being commonplace enough in matter and pedantic in treatment; but it was deemed of sufficient importance by Gosson to provoke an answer under the title of *Playes confuted in Five Actions, &c.* (printed 1582). By this time Lodge had become a regular literary handicraftsman; and there is evidence to show that he at one time actually pursued the profession of a player[2]. His *Alarum against Usurers*[3] (1584) is a tract on the social evil mentioned in the title, and is dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. Not long afterwards Lodge, to use his own phrase, fell 'from bookes to armes,' accompanying a Captain Clarke in a patriotic raid upon the islands of Tercera and the Canaries; and it was on this voyage that, in order to beguile its tedium, he, according to his own account, composed his prose tale of *Rosalynde, Euphues' Golden Legacie, found in his cell at Silextra*, which afterwards suggested the story of Shakspere's *As You Like It*[4]. This novel was published in 1590; in the previous year Lodge had given to the world a volume of poems, in which was included the '*most pithie and pleasant Historie of Glaucus and Silla.*' A work mentioned by him in his *Rosalynde*, and called *The Sailors*

[1] Edited for the Shakesp. Society (1853) by Mr. Laing.

[2] *Memoirs of E. Alleyn*, p. 45.

[3] Printed for the Shakesp. Society, 1853.

[4] Lodge's own debt in this novel to the *Tale of Gamelyn* was by no means large. See N. Delius, *Lodge's Rosalynde u. Sh.'s As You Like It*, in *Jahrbuch d. deutsch. Shakesp. Gesellsch.*, 1871 (vol. vi), p. 249.

Kalender, has unfortunately not been preserved. His literary labours now continued to follow upon one another in rapid succession. The *Tragedy of the Wounds of the Civil War* (published 1594) was probably written at an earlier date; and was followed by a species of historical romance, the *History of Robert, second Duke of Normandy, surnamed* (as Lodge says, 'for his youthful imperfections') *Robin the Divell;* and by an apparently controversial tract, *Catharos: Diogenes in his Singularitie, christened by him, Nettle for Nice Noses.* In 1591 Lodge seems to have been at sea again, accompanying the famous navigator Cavendish in his last expedition, his *Euphues' Shadow* being published in his absence by his friend Greene. On his return from this ill-starred voyage he resumed his literary labours, among which is to be noted the play of *A Looking Glasse for London and England*, written by him conjointly with Greene, who died about this time. The supposition that in the *Groatsworth of Wit*, published after Greene's death, Lodge is the person referred to under the name of 'Young Juvenal,' appears to me to have been satisfactorily disproved[1]. In 1593 Lodge published his *Phillis*, a series of sonnets and elegies; in 1594 his two dramatic works, already named, made their appearance, and in 1595 his *Fig for Momus*, on the strength of which he has been termed the first English satirist. The remainder of his works, which include a historical romance (*William Longbeard*), and several tracts, need not be enumerated. His extensive literary exertions seem however to have been insufficient to preserve him from pecuniary difficulties; and comparatively late in life he resolved to adopt a regular profession, that of medicine, for which he qualified himself by studies abroad, taking his degree of Doctor of Physic at Avignon, and afterwards, in 1602, being incorporated with this degree in the University of Oxford. His works were henceforth of a more settled and sober cast: a translation of Josephus, a *Treatise of the Plague*, and a translation of Seneca (published 1614). He died in 1625.

The career of Lodge is interesting as showing the

[1] By Mr. R. Simpson, in a letter to *The Academy*, April 11, 1874.

versatility which could be reached by a literary man of his age, who combined with a classical training a vigorous productive power of the second order. His prose, so far as I am acquainted with it, bears a strong resemblance, though not of a closely imitative kind, to that of Lyly. His verse strikes me as happier than his prose, and occasionally he exhibits a singular ease and grace in expression and versification[1]. We are, however, only concerned in this place with his efforts as a dramatist.

The Wounds of Civil War (1590 *circ.*).

The Wounds of Civil War lively set forth in the true tragedies of Marius and Sylla[2] (first printed 1594, but acted earlier, certainly after *Tamburlaine*[3]) is a very curious production, founded no doubt upon Sir Thomas North's *Lives from Plutarch*, though being a scholar the author may have referred to the original. The subject suggests an endless succession of stirring scenes, and there is much vigour in many of the speeches, particularly in Sylla's address to his flying troops[4]. The piece, which contains an abundance of rhymes, is enlivened by comic scenes; there is a clown; and a very strange notion induces the author to make the Gaul commissioned to slay Marius in prison talk broken French, and, when terrified by the glance of the captive hero, cry out 'Me no dare kill Marius; adieu Messieurs; me be dead si je touche Marius;' and finally run from the stage shrieking forth a Christian oath. Equally inappropriate, though adapted to the fashion of the times, is the fanciful treatment of one of the most effective situations of the story. Marius, as a solitary fugitive in the Numidian desert, makes his complaint to Echo, who answers him by repeating his last word. This is a genuine piece of euphuistic cleverness, and effectively mars the strength of the situation[5].

[1] See *e. g.* the charming lines from the poem in commendation of a solitary life in Laing, *u. s.*, p. 1, and the pleasing erotic which interrupts the rather dull tale of *Forbonius and Prisceria* in the same volume. Lodge has been identified (by Malone) with *Alcon* in Spenser's *Teares of the Muses*; he repaid the compliment in his *Phillis*. See *Memoirs of Alleyn*, p. 40.

[2] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. viii.

[3] Cf. Collier, iii. 214-5.

[4] Act i. sc. 1.

[5] Cf. Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (i. 1) and Dekker's *Olde Fortunatus* (i. 1) for the same device; and see Dyce's note to Shirley's *Love Tricks* (iv. 4).

A Looking-glasse for London, &c.

Lodge's other play was written in conjunction with Greene, and is noticed among the dramatic works of that author [1].

Thomas Nash (1565 *circ.*–1602 *circ.*).

With the names of the dramatists already enumerated in the present chapter is intimately connected that of THOMAS NASH. He was born, according to his own statement, at Lowestoft in Suffolk: the year of his birth is unknown, but he took his B.A. degree (from St. John's College, Cambridge) in 1585. He was subsequently expelled from the University,—as it is said, for taking part in a piece (not extant) called *Terminus et non Terminus;* after this he seems to have gone abroad and travelled in Italy, with whose literature he displays great familiarity; and he was an author in London by the year 1587. In a play written before the decease of Queen Elisabeth (*The Returne from Pernassus*) he is spoken of as dead [2].

As a dramatist there is no reason to believe Nash to have been either fertile or successful. He is only known with certainty to have composed two plays, besides co-operating in, or completing, Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage*. (Another play, *See me or See me not*, non-extant, has also been ascribed to him.) Of the plays certainly written by him, the *Isle of Dogs*, which caused the imprisonment of its author, was never printed [3]. A few years previously—in 1592—his *Summer's Last Will and Testament* was exhibited, at the house of some nobleman at Croydon, before Queen Elisabeth; but it was not printed till 1600 [4]. It is something between a morality and a 'show;' but besides the Seasons and other mythological figures a real personage appears in the shape of Will

Summer's Last Will and Testament (acted 1592).

[1] *Ante*, p. 223.

[2] Cf. Dyce's *Introduction* to Middleton's *Works*, p. xviii (*note*).

[3] It is referred to by Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* in these terms: 'As Actaeon was worried by his own hounds, so is Tom Nash of his *Isle of Dogs*. Dogs were the death of Euripides; but be not disconsolate, gallant young Juvenal; Linus the son of Apollo died the same death. Yet God forbid, that so brave a wit should so basely perish!—Thine are but paper dogs,' &c.—Nash seems to have been released in the following year (1599).

[4] See Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. ix.

Summer (Henry VIII's jester[1]), who 'sits as chorus 'flouts the actors,' as he says, after the fashion of plays, such as the *Rehearsal* and the *Critic*, or, in degree, of Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Hu* There is but little plot in the piece, in which, as the mentator tells us, 'because the plague reigns in most p in this latter end of Summer, Summer must come in yield his throne to Autumn, make Winter his exec The reference is to the Plague of the year 1592, whicl in part caused by a drought so severe that the Th was fordable near London Bridge[2], and in consequen which the playhouses were closed. Summer calls b him the other Seasons, and their offspring and compan such as Orion, Bacchus, Harvest, Christmas, 'Backwi and others; and in the dialogues thus arising abun opportunity is found both for description and for s The command of language which Nash possessed is mirably shown in a variety of passages; at times he into writing of something more than ingenuity. O praise of the Dog, *e.g.*, would commend itself eve modern observers, and is very humorous to boot, and praise of poverty and Winter's assault upon Conten tion and the Liberal Arts are ingenious pieces of soph while in passages of Sol's apology there is some po beauty, and the song or litany which precedes Sum death has a touch of Ralegh in its epigrammatic m choly[3]. The great amount of erudition which this

[1] He is several times referred to in John Heywood's *Play of the W* cf. ante, p. 138, note 3.

[2] See Summer's description of the exhaustion of the Thames.

[3] '. . . . . .
Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour:
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair.
Dust hath clos'd Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must die.
. Lord have mercy on us!
. . . . . .
Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny:
Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage.

displays—though its classical quotations are not always accurate—would doubtless have made it unsuitable to a 'common stage;' but Queen Elisabeth's learned tastes were never provided with a more appropriately-seasoned banquet, in which the ingredient of flattery is of course not omitted. This play alone would prove Nash to have been what he was, a master of a rhetoric of a far more substantial and vigorous kind than Lyly's.

Grissil (acted 1600 *circ.*).

It was in direct controversy that his genius for invective naturally found its main vent. Nash is chiefly to be remembered as a pamphleteer, in which capacity he displayed a quite unparalleled energy. He was an ardent friend (his Preface to Greene's *Arcadia*, in 1589, seems to have been his first publication), and an equally ardent enemy. In the famous *Marprelate* controversy, adverted to below, he bore himself with the utmost spirit against adversaries who, in Mr. Collier's words [1], 'were legion; but no match for him at any point but in tedious quotations from Scripture.' His *Almond for a Parrat* may be read in confirmation of this tribute of praise [2]. Reference has already been made to his quarrel with Gabriel Harvey and his two brothers, which seems to have sprung out of the quarrel between Harvey and Lyly, and to have been embittered by Richard Harvey's attack upon Lyly and Nash himself (in *Plaine Percevall*), and by Gabriel Harvey's assault upon Greene's memory. Very probably the private quarrel was the cause of both Nash's and Lyly's taking part in the public controversy [3]. Nash's

Nash as a pamphleteer.

> Mount we unto the sky.
> I am sick, I must die.
> Lord have mercy on us!'

By the bye the unexplained 'Domingo' in the Song of Bacchus' companions,

> 'Monsieur Mingo for quaffing doth surpass,' &c.,

of which the two last lines are quoted in 2 *Henry IV*, act v. sc. 3, may possibly owe his origin to the type of Mingo Revulgo (i.e. Domingo Vulgus) in the famous Spanish *Coplas;* as to which see Ticknor, *Hist. of Span. Lit.*, i. 232–3.

[1] Introduction to *Pierce Pennilesse* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1842).

[2] Published among the *Puritan Discipline Tracts*, 1846. The title is there explained to be equivalent to 'a Sop for Cerberus,' and is traced to Skelton.

[3] See the Introduction to *Plaine Percevall*, in the *Puritan Discipline Tracts* collection (1860).

Christ's Tears over Jerusalem (printed 1593) contains an apology to Harvey, and is altogether of a repentant and religious character; but his authorship of it has been doubted. A passage in the verses at the commencement of his *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Devil* is written in a similar vein. This curious tract, which contains a defence of poetry and plays, has some interesting literary references (*e.g.* to the old play of *Henry V*), and laments the poverty to which authors are exposed. Praise is bestowed in it upon the generosity of Sir Philip Sidney, of whose poems Nash edited an impression. His *Life of Jack Wilton* is well known to have originated one of the most long-lived fables in English literary biography[1]. Altogether he was a most versatile proficient in literary composition; it was said of him that he 'compiled a learned treatise in the praise of a red herring;' and in truth, with such a writer, the subject is of secondary importance; the style is the man.

Henry Chettle (1564–1607 *circ.*). Hoffman (acted 1602).

HENRY CHETTLE (1564–1607 *circ.*) is known to have written at least sixteen plays of his own, and to have contributed to thirty-four others. Among the former the sanguinary but not very powerful tragedy of *Hoffman, or, A Revenge for a Father*[2] (acted 1602) has alone been preserved. The first act, with all its ghastliness, is perhaps the best part of this play, the hero of which boasts—nor vainly—that the tragedy wreaked by him 'shall surpass those of Thyestes, Tereus, Jocasta' or Medea. Some degree of resemblance to *Hamlet* suggests itself both in the general motive of *Hoffman* and in the madness of the heroine; but the passion of Chettle's play is very rude and very indigestible.

Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton's Patient

The 'comedy' of *Patient Grissil*[3] (acted probably early in 1600, printed 1603) was written conjointly by Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton. Into the history of the subject

[1] That of Surrey's knight-errantry in honour of the Lady Geraldine.

[2] Edited, with an Introduction, by H. B. C. (London, 1852). Chettle's relations to Greene and Shakspere are noticed in my remarks on those poets. Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* calls him 'one of the best for comedy;' but judging from the titles of his plays, it was in tragedy that he was most prolific.

[3] Edited for the Shakesp. Society by Mr. Collier (1841).

Grissil (acted 1660 *circ*).

which it treats this is not the place to enter; suffice it to say that the story commended itself to the stage at a very early period, and furnished the plot of one of the few French mysteries on a secular subject[1]. Hans Sachs too produced a 'comedi' on the story of Griselda, ending with a copious moral, according to his wont[2]. Our play was probably in the first instance founded upon the prose tract reproducing this popular theme, which had given rise to several ballads in the sixteenth century. I have noticed no immediate influence of Chaucer in the work of Chettle and his co-adjutors. Indeed, the necessity of compressing the limits of time makes the action of the play more probable than that of the poem, which extends over a long number of years. And though even the spectators of the play must have found it difficult to reconcile the proceedings of the 'thoughtful markis' with the demands of reason, yet it must be conceded that the authors very skilfully contrive to humanise his inhuman trial of his wife's obedience. In short, *Patient Grissil* (which contains two charming lyrics[3]) is a production not only effective but pleasing. The character of the faithful Babulo, the Clown, is a mingling of broad fun with some touches of true pathos;—our generation has known an actor who would have done justice to the spasmodic violence with which the old fellow gulps down emotion with a joke[4]. On the other hand, the

[1] See Collier's Introduction, p. vi; and Ebert, *Entwicklungsgesch.*, &c., p. 33. Collier gives 1393 as the date, Ebert 1395.

[2] See Goedeke u. Tittmann, *Dichtungen von Hans Sachs*, iii. 48 *seqq.* Hans Sachs refers to Boccaccio as his original. The date of H. S.'s play is 1546.

[3] The song 'Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?' (i. 1) and the lullaby (iv. 2). On account of Dekker's lyrical gift they have been ascribed to him; but I know nothing of his equal to the former of the pair.

[4] In act iv. sc. 2. 'Enter Babulo, with a bundle of osiers in one arm, and a child in another; Grissil after him with another' (she has been expelled with her (twin) children from her husband's house, and driven to seek refuge with her father). How admirably the late Mr. Robson would have given Babulo's speech: 'A fig for care! old master, but now old grandsire, take this little Pope Innocent: we'll give over basket-making, and turn nurses. She has uncled Laureo. It's no matter, you shall go make a fire. Grandsire, you shall dandle them. Grissil shall go make pap, and I'll lick the skillet; but first I'll fetch a cradle. It's a sign 'tis not a dear year, when they come by two at once. Here's a couple, quoth jackdaw. Art thou there? Sing grandsire.'

humour of the Welsh Sir Owen (whose shrewish charmer Gwenthyan is intended as a comic antitype to the patient wife) has a very by-gone flavour; but the Tudor public seems never to have wearied of gibes against the Welsh compatriots of the founder of the dynasty; and the union of Wales and England seems to have been thought a standing joke for a long time after it had been consummated in name. Shakspere, as usual, was able to give a sympathetic turn even to a national prejudice[1].

Anthony Munday (1553–1633). His life and labours.

In another play, *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, Chettle was a coadjutor of ANTHONY MUNDAY; or perhaps only made additions to a work originally composed by Munday alone. The dates of Munday's plays are stated to range from 1580 to 1621; he was born in 1553, and died in 1633. He gained notoriety by publishing an account of the conspiracy of the Jesuit Campion in 1582, appearing as a witness against some of the accused, and even being employed to confute them at the gallows' foot. The hostility which he thus drew upon himself has doubtless rendered it difficult to establish the facts of his singular career. In his youth he seems to have spent some time at Rome; and after his journey (possibly before it also) to have been a member of the theatrical company of the Earl of Oxford. At one time, perhaps as a reward for his services as a volunteer detective, he held the office of 'one of the Messengers of her Majesty's Chamber.' But it is by his connexion with the City that he is best known; himself 'a citizen and a draper,' he was, as already stated, the author of several City Pageants. Yet that he also enjoyed a considerable reputation as a dramatist proper, is evident from his being mentioned by Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, as the 'best plotter,' *i.e.* contriver of dramatic plots. Ben Jonson, from what motive or with what degree of reason it is impossible to determine, accordingly ridicules him, under the character of Antonio Balladino, both for his city entertainments and for his literary renown[2].

[1] Perhaps Chettle took the same line in his play of *The Valiant Welchman*, in which Drayton co-operated.

[2] See *The Case is Altered*, act i. sc. 1: 'You are not pageant poet to the city

Of Munday's numerous contributions to dramatic and other literature[1] few have been preserved. His lively comedy of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (of which the MS. bears the date 1595) only exists in an imperfect state. Its chief characters are two wizards of popular fame resembling Friars Bacon and Bungay; the rustic orator Turnop is likewise amusing. But more interest attaches to *The Downfall*, and its sequel, *The Death, of Robert Earl of Huntington*. Both were produced in 1598, and printed in 1601; and of the latter Chettle is named as joint author[2].

Munday's Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington (acted 1598).

Neither taken individually nor viewed in conjunction do these plays bear out Munday's title to the praise of 'the best plotter' of his age. Indeed, nothing could be looser than the construction of these plays. The *Downfall* begins with an Induction, in which the principal part is taken by Skelton, who accompanies with an explanatory comment a dumb-show shadowing forth the argument of the play. Its subject is the overthrow of the Earl of Huntington, otherwise 'the poor man's patron, Robin Hood,' from his high estate, by the violence of Prince John, the villainy of the Earl's enemies, and the faithlessness of his steward Warman, who is afterwards made sheriff of Nottingham. Prince John is enamoured of Marian or Matilda, daughter to Earl Fitzwater, and betrothed to Robin; and Queen Elinor is enamoured of Robin himself. The wiles of his foes force Robin to betake himself once more to an outlaw's life with his merry men in Sherwood Forest; but in the end King Richard arrives as a *deus ex machinâ*, and restores the hero and his friends to honourable estate.

Chettle and Munday's Death of Robert Earl of Huntington (acted 1598).

The play however announces itself as incomplete, and Skelton (who, after playing the part of Friar Tuck, and being allowed 'a word or two besides the play' in act iv, again comes forward as stage-manager and Epilogus at the

of Milan, sir, are you?' and 'You are in print already for the best plotter.' As to Munday's life and writings, see Collier's *Five Old Plays* (Supplement to Dodsley's *Old Plays*), Introduction to *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, p. 4 *seqq*.

[1] See Collier's list in his edition of *John a Kent*, &c. (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1851).

[2] Both will be found in the volume just cited.

close) promises the continuation of the subject in another tragedy. In the first act of the *Death* we accordingly see the hero killed by poison; and the remainder of the tragedy is chiefly occupied with King John's attempts to secure the love of Matilda, Robin's virgin widow. She eludes him by seeking refuge in an abbey; but being pursued even there, willingly takes poison from the hands of the agent of the baffled tyrant. King John himself is by repentance and an insurrection induced at the end of the play to promise to amend his ways.

In all this there is of course neither historical truth nor even a faithful adherence to popular tradition. In details as well as in the general construction there is evidence of carelessness on the part of the author or authors; and upon the whole these plays are as hurriedly written as they are hurriedly put together. They are full (especially the *Downfall*) of rhymes, often of an indifferent kind; quatrains are largely interspersed; and apart from the Skeltonical verse (which is by no means good of its kind), the metre is varied by short lines. Yet in both plays there are passages of considerable vigour and spirit; and care alone was wanting to weld good materials into a satisfactory whole[1].

Munday was also joint author, with Michael Drayton,

[1] The speeches of Leicester, *Downfall*, iv. 1, are very effective; the references to the *bear* were doubtless acceptable at court. In Bruce's speech, *Death*, v. 2, there is even a touch of imaginative descriptive power. The scene, immediately following, in which Maid Marian's dead body, clad in white, is borne on the stage, must have been very touching; it will remind the modern reader of a beautiful passage in the *Idylls of the King*. Warman's attempt at suicide (*Downfall*, v. 1) is obviously a reminiscence of the end of Judas in the mysteries; but it is very vigorous in its way. On the other hand, King John's vision, *Death*, i. 2, introduces abstract figures, as if the authors had remembered Bishop Bale's Chronicle History.—I am convinced that Shakspere was acquainted with these plays. Mr. Collier has pointed out the resemblance between a famous line in *Macbeth* and one in *The Death*:

'The multitudes of seas dyed red with blood.'

The Mask in ii. 2 did not of course suggest that in *Henry VIII*, which Shakspere took from Cavendish; but the resemblance (with a difference) in the situations is striking. The song of Friar Tuck, when disguised as a pedlar (*Downfall*, iii. 1), should also be compared with that of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* (iv. 3).

R. Wilson, and R. Hathwaye, of the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*[1], a play which, having been published in 1600 with the name of Shakspere on the title-page (though this would seem to have been afterwards removed), has occupied the attention of sanguine critics. But already Malone placed its real authorship beyond doubt[2]; and its merits must be discussed without reference to any supposition of Shaksperean origin. Schlegel spoke of it as a model of the biographical drama; Hazlitt, on the other hand, considered it a very indifferent composition. The latter opinion seems to me the nearer to the truth. Whether or not the lost *Second Part* may have been able to make the hero as interesting on the stage as he is in history, the *First* in my opinion fails to attain to this end. Sir John Oldcastle here appears as nothing more than an injured innocent. But the play is very stirring in its action; and contains both scenes and characters of a very vivacious humour, such as the scene in which the servant of Sir John forces the summoner to eat his writ, and the characters of the servant in question, the faithful but irrepressible Harpool, and the Irishman, who on being taken to the gallows to suffer for his misdeeds, entreats the 'lord shudge' to let him be 'hang'd in a wyth after his own country, the Irish fashion.' Nor should I pass by the very ungodly Sir John, the Parson of Wrotham,—a character which, had it been drawn by Shakspere, might indeed furnish us with a very distinct clue as to the poet's opinions concerning the Church authorities of his day. But it was not drawn by Shakspere; and Anthony Munday's views on the subject are of minor importance.

Munday and others' First Part of Sir John Oldcastle (1597–1600).

ROBERT WILSON (who was baptised in 1579 and died in 1610[3]) has just been mentioned as joint author of one of these earlier plays. His name occurs in Henslowe's *Diary*, and Meres speaks of him as 'for learning and ex-

Robert Wilson (d. 1610).

[1] Printed in the *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i.

[2] *Inquiry*, p. 293. Its relation in *subject* to the *First Part of Henry IV* will be touched upon below. A passage in the Prologue, and two references to the Shaksperean Falstaff in iii. 4, prove *Henry IV* to have preceded the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*.

[3] Collier's *Memoirs of Actors*, Introd. p. xviii. *note* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1846).

Michael Drayton (1563–1631).

temporal wit, without compare or compeer[1].' Of MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631), the well-known author of the *Barons' Wars* and the *Polyolbion*, only the titles of independent plays exist[2]. He seems to have been beloved as well as respected by his contemporaries[3], and Ben Jonson wrote his epitaph. Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra*, to be noticed below, was written in 1594; but it was not acted, while the Countess of Pembroke's *Antony* (written in 1590, printed in 1595) professed to be nothing more than a translation[4].

The term 'Shakspere's Predecessors' explained.

I have spoken of the writers whose principal dramatic works have been briefly reviewed in this chapter as the Predecessors of Shakspere. By this term, as will have been gathered from the dates incidentally mentioned, I do not of course imply anything beyond the fact that they had one and all come before the public as dramatists antecedently to the period in which Shakspere himself may be supposed to have begun to work as an original dramatic author. It will be seen, in the subsequent remarks on the dramatic career of Shakspere himself, that this period cannot be fixed with absolute certainty. His professional life in London had however undoubtedly begun two or three years before he first came forward as an original dramatist (as distinguished from a mere adapter of plays), which event is in all probability to be assigned to a date not later than the year 1590. Now, of the dramatic works described in this chapter the earliest can at the most be dated as far back as 1584; the rest range from that time onwards into the period of Shakspere's undoubted original productivity. While therefore the influence of Shakspere himself may have affected the dramatic labours of several among these writers, they one and all began their careers before he had begun his, and some—notably Marlowe—had closed their contributions to the roll of

[1] See Collier's Introduction, reprinted in vol. vi. of the new edition of Dodsley's *Old Plays*, p. 13, where a distinction is suggested between this Robert Wilson and the author of two plays noted in chap. ii.

[2] They are, as might have been expected, chiefly of a historical character. See *Biographia Dramatica*.

[3] *Vide ante*, p. 176, note 1.

[4] Collier, iii. 255.

our dramatic literature before his had more than fairly commenced.

From this point of view it may be worth while, before passing to the most splendid achievements of the Elisabethan drama—the works of Shakspere himself—to pause for a moment, in order to consider what had been accomplished by Shakspere's immediate predecessors, and under what circumstances their labours had been carried on.

Historical aspects of the period of Shakspere's Predecessors.

The great European struggle decided.

The last decennium but one of the sixteenth century is, in our political history, the most critical as well as the most glorious period of Elisabeth's reign. It was in the middle of this decennium—in the years 1584, 1585, and 1586,—that three conspiracies were discovered, the combined result of which was at last to determine the Queen to send her rival to the scaffold. In 1587 the unhappy Queen of Scots, 'the daughter of Debate,' as Elisabeth called her, fell a victim, less to the memory of the past than to the situation of the present, which had become no longer endurable on either side; and in 1588 the avenging Armada was dissipated by England's allies, the winds and the waves, and by the efforts of her own sons who had learnt in distant waters how to overthrow Spanish invincibility. Already in 1589 the shores of the Pyrenean peninsula were visited by an English expedition: and from this time forth England no longer stood on the defensive in the great struggle, and the efforts of her riper statesmen were directed rather to curbing than to fostering the national enthusiasm for its continuance. In its two chief phases on the European continent, that great struggle was in this same period virtually settled against the predominance of Spain and Spanish policy. The year 1590 may be regarded as a turning-point both in the struggle of the Netherlands for independence, and in the attempt of the League to make itself the master of France. English aid had been but scantily given to either the United Provinces or to the Huguenots; the expedition of Leicester had been worse than useless, and the English volunteers who fought for Henry of Navarre had been few in number.

But the sympathies of the bulk of the English people had coincided with the general bent of English policy; and the steady progress of the successes of Maurice of Nassau, as well as the accession to the French throne of Henry IV, left no doubt remaining as to the virtually decided issue of the great European struggle. Those Englishmen who had taken a personal part in the contest were not indeed a considerable proportion of the nation; but the sea-rovers who had become national heroes had pointed the way to glory as well as gold, and the adventurous youth of the nation knew no more stirring ambition, and thought they knew no more promising speculation, than that of following in the footsteps of a Drake. The volunteers and other soldiers who returned from the Netherlands were thought by observers to be rather more numerous than those who had gone thither; but some noble English memories associated themselves with the battle-fields of the Continent as well as with the naval enterprises of the English Channel and of the far Western seas.

The Queen the incarnation of the national cause.

If the blood of the nation had thus been stirred by an era of unprecedented importance in the relations of the country to foreign powers, at home the change which had come over the aspect of things had been not less momentous. Queen Elisabeth had now become in very truth the incarnation of the national cause. The season of her coquetting with foreign proposals of marriage drew gradually to its inevitable end; 'Monsieur's days[1]' were coming to be remembered as a thing of the past; while the doubtful prospect of a union between the Queen and the favourite of her heart was closed, before his brilliant but miserable life was extinguished amidst suspicions as dark as those which beset his fame. So long as Elisabeth chose to coquet with the possibility of marriage, and so long as Leicester lived, loyal flattery was tuned to honour her foibles and sympathise with her preference; and a false note accordingly makes itself heard in the contemporary tributes, whether passing or elaborate, in honour of the

[1] 1581, when the Duke of Anjou (afterwards Henry III) resided in England. See Middleton's *A Mad World, my Masters* (iv. 2) *et al.*

Virgin Queen. Gradually, however, she became to her subjects less of a person and more of an idea; and happily for her fame, the woman was forgotten in the national sovereign. Loyalty and patriotism became convertible terms. Only the persecuted Catholics, political offenders because the profession of their faith was identified with the cause of the foes of Queen and nation, and those Protestants who could not reconcile their system of religious life and doctrine with the established forms of Church government, remained as discordant elements in the concert of a politically united people. For neither of these was there any sympathy left in the government, in the national party among the higher orders of the population, in the broad current of public opinion. The Catholics, if they were fortunate enough to escape persecution, remained isolated from their fellow-subjects. While London audiences applauded the exposure on the stage of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Catholic manor-houses may have solaced themselves with the secret performance of the anti-Reformation moralities of a past age[1]. Puritanism, on the other hand, was rapidly developing into a new phase of its history. At the beginning of this period Puritan tendencies had still been observable among many of Elisabeth's leading statesmen; and her favourite Leicester himself had been regarded as the head of a party favouring views of this description. But as the movement assumed a wider scope, its significance became a totally new one; and ruthlessly suppressed in its outward manifestations, it doggedly nursed for the future the seeds of a democratic revolution in Church and State.

General movement in literature.

It was in times thus widely and strangely stirred that our Elisabethan literature really began its glorious course. The most cursory glance will serve to recall the fact that not in the drama alone, but in a wide variety of other fields of literary productivity, the years of which I am speaking were full of

[1] See Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, section on *Catholic and Protestant Dramas*. Sir John Yorke was fined by the Star-Chamber as late as 1614 for allowing a play to be acted at his house containing 'many foul passages to the vilifying of our religion and exacting of popery.'

exuberant life. In them Spenser, with Ralegh by his side, was writing his great epic, the most magnificent monument of the aspirations as well as of the achievements of the age[1]. In them Sidney's prose-romance was received as a bequest by a mourning nation[2]. The earliest publications of Daniel, of Warner, of Drayton, of Davies and Constable are spanned by the same brief series of years. Hall was about to publish his Satires, which in date of composition had already been preceded by Donne's. Stowe was systematising the national annals; and the translation of Sir Thomas North was opening to English readers of history the great treasure-house of ancient examples. Hakluyt was describing the voyages and discoveries of Englishmen, and Ralegh was putting forth his narrative of the most marvellous 'Discoverie' of all.

Classical and Italian influences still operating.

Some of these efforts merely amounted to a continuation of previous literary tendencies; and by the side of them progressed the publication of an abundant popular literature of novels and tales from foreign sources, and of controversial tracts called forth by the general activity of the national life. The worthy critics who like George Puttenham at this time[3] took stock of the achievements of our national poetical literature, failed to realise in its dimensions or in its scope the mighty change which was in progress[4]. A few years only passed, and the results of modern criticism seem already to be anticipated by a diligent observer of contemporary effort[5]. For in truth a literature such as this had, if the expression be permissible,

[1] The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590.

[2] He fell in 1586; *The Arcadia* was published in 1592.

[3] His *Arte of English Poesie* was published in 1589. Puttenham, by the bye, was himself a dramatist; but his plays, none of which are preserved, seem to have been mostly of an earlier type. They included, besides a comedy entitled *Ginecocratia*, two 'enterludes,' *Lusty London* and *Woer* (the latter 'yielding a specimen of female pertness'), and a series of *Triumphals* in honour of Queen Elisabeth. See Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays*, i. xiii. *note*.

[4] See the well-known passage at the end of Bk. I.

[5] 'The English tongue,' says Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598), 'is mightily enriched, and gorgeouslie inuested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments by sir *Philip Sidney*, *Spencer*, *Daniel*, *Drayton*, *Warner*, *Shakespeare*. *Marlowe*, and *Chapman*,'—a judicious selection of names for any survey of the poetical literature of the age.

justified itself of itself. It had outgrown the trammels of mere fashion under which it had begun its course,—even of a fashion imposed by a Court whose centre was a sovereign sure of her learning and not distrustful of her powers of judgment. The tastes of the Tudor Court remained true to the traditions of the Renascence. The ancient classical models, or the half-accidental selection of them which had acquired the ascendant, and the literary precedents derived from the nation to which the revival of those models was primarily due,—the Italian,—accordingly long remained on their pedestal of pre-eminence. The learning of the Universities merely reflected the same tastes. The euphuism of Lyly was to a great extent an imitation of Italian examples; and the subjects of his dramas, not less than the ornaments of their diction, displayed a fond belief in the inexhaustible resources of classical lore. Gabriel Harvey sought to reform 'English versifying' on un-English principles; and Daniel had to break a lance against Sidney himself in defence of our English heritage of rhyme. The unnatural vitality of euphuism—'nothing,' says Ben Jonson[1], 'is fashionable till it be deformed'—is the best proof of the power which belonged to the tastes of the Court. The writers who addressed themselves directly or primarily to courtly ears, Sidney himself among them, were all more or less emphatically euphuists. It was by the imitation of classical models, or by efforts savouring of the 'Italianated' taste of the Court, that great writers as well as small—a Spenser, a Marlowe, a Peele, and a Shakspere—sought to commend themselves to the favour of royal or noble patronage. Other dramatists, or their admirers on their behalf, appealed to their classical epopees and their 'sugared sonnets' as their titles to literary reputation. The author of *Doctor Faustus* was remembered for his *Hero and Leander*, Shakspere's first offering to his patron was *Venus and Adonis;* and Meres cannot compare our poets, in life or in death, to any parallels but Classical or Italian predecessors.

But our literature was fast broadening beyond such

[1] *Discoveries* (*De vere argutis*).

The drama the main agent in nationalising Elisabethan literature.

bounds by its fertility, diversity, and power. That it swept these bounds away altogether, and in the end attained to an unsurpassed grandeur and fulness of developement, was primarily due to the mighty progress of one of its branches. This branch was the drama.

The greatness of the Elisabethan drama not due to patronage.

That this incontestable fact should only gradually have become apparent to the age which witnessed it, admits of easy explanation. In the first place, the glories of the Elisabethan drama were not due to patronage,—that nurse, often necessary, often unsafe, of literary success.

The extent of the patronage bestowed upon the drama by Queen Elisabeth

Queen Elisabeth's love of the drama was most genuine and enduring; but the impulse to the marvellous progress which our dramatic literature achieved in her reign was not of her giving, nor was it her hand which sustained the growth upon which she consistently smiled. Almost insatiable as she was in her fondness for plays, expending considerable sums upon their performance at Court[1], and equally willing to be entertained by them at the houses of her nobles, at the Colleges in the Universities, and at the Inns of Court, she seems to have formed no exception to the general rule, that the habitual playgoer is the most catholic of pleasure-seekers in his own line of diversion. I discover no signs of discrimination in the list of the plays acted before her. Indeed, there is reason to doubt whether even an endless succession of productions such as those of Edwards and Lyly would have cloyed that robust appetite. The seasoning which she preferred was classical quotation and personal flattery; and this, as we have seen, was strewed before her with no sparing hand.

and by the nobility in this period.

Among the great nobles several—and notably the most powerful of all, the Endymion of this Diana—had companies of players[2], and must accordingly have taken a more or less personal interest in the plays produced by their 'servants.' But one discovers no evidence of a patronage which intelligently directed itself to the encouragement of

[1] Collier, i. 189 *seqq.*

[2] Their performances were regulated by the statute 14 Elis. c. 5; see Collier, i. 203. Lord Leicester's players were licensed to perform 'within the city of London' as well as elsewhere by the famous patent of 1574; *ib.* p. 210.

literary merit in the playwright actors; and if Burghley was bitterly satirised by Spenser for his coldness to the claims of poetic literature in general, Lyly sought to engage his good offices before he had become a writer for the stage, and Peele only ventured to solicit his munificence by the offer of a commonplace non-dramatic work. Such aristocratic patronage as the writers discussed in this chapter enjoyed was both fitful and apparently unproductive. It is only at the close of this period that the names of Southampton and Pembroke appear in connexion with that which has reflected honour upon theirs; and in the later days of Elisabeth we can clearly recognise in the younger nobility of which Essex was at once type and leader, and in Essex himself, true lovers, not of the stage only, but of dramatic literature.

Except then where, as in the case of Lyly, and of Peele in his first dramatic work, the dramatists directly accommodated themselves to the demands of the well-established tastes of Queen and Court, it was rather they who led their patrons, than their patrons who directed them. If the adventurous volunteers apostrophised by Peele found it difficult to tear themselves from 'Mahomet, Scipio, and Tamerlane,' they left other audiences behind them to applaud these 'pagan vaunts[1].' Dramatists, patrons, and public shared the influence of their times. A stirring age called for stirring themes; and these again for a corresponding vigour of treatment. If 'the style is the man,' so the style is also the age; and the general tension of men's minds manifests itself in every branch of the art which most easily and quickly reproduced it. Neatness and symmetry of construction were neglected for fulness and variety of matter. Novelty and grandeur of subject seemed suited by a swelling amplitude and even reckless extravagance of diction. The balance of rhymed couplets gave way to the forward march of blank-verse, as if from an inner necessity; 'strong lines' were as inevitably called for as strong situations and strong characters. Individuality distinguished the degree in which, either in form or in matter, the several writers

Requirements of the public and the times.

[1] Cf. Hall's *Satires*, i. 1.

were subject to such influences; a Greene could not rise to the passion of a Marlowe, nor a Marlowe imitate the joyous vivacity of a Greene; but the stamp of the age was impressed upon them all, and no less powerful an influence than this could have marked them all, distinct in their poetic individualities, as a homogeneous group of national writers.

Peculiar conditions of the lives of these dramatists.

But it would have been impossible for these dramatists thus to give expression to the full spirit of the age to which they belonged, had not the outward conditions of their lives placed them in the very midst of the current, instead of leaving them to lounge as bystanders on its banks, to note and speculate on its phenomena, or to indite letters 'touching the earthquake in April last, and our English reformed versifying.'

I have narrated the lives of these dramatists very briefly, but without seeking to cast a veil over their errors any more than over their misfortunes. Of these errors I need not now speak again; to suppose that at any time the experience of folly and vice is a necessary pro-gymnasium for any intellectual labours, is to invert the rational system of human progress, in which all intellectual achievements must find their legitimate place. Genius must have its years of journeying, as it must have its years of apprenticeship; but it is misfortune only, not the operation of any inevitable law, which so often leads those years of journeying to include a sojourn in the tangled woods of Bohemia. Not all periods of literary effort are, however, equally smiled upon by the clear light of common day; and the lives of these men were beset by dangers and difficulties, as well as filled with opportunities, of an exceptional character. These sprang from the condition in which the dramatists found the sphere of their endeavours, the stage.

The professions of playwright and actor ordinarily combined as a matter of course.

To minds exalted and animated by an active imagination, and fed by the varied experience of men and books which we know these writers to have undergone at an early period of their lives, the literature of the drama offered the most obvious and the most promising outlet. But the literature of the drama had already so thoroughly established its natural union with the stage, and the possibility of

gaining a livelihood as a playwright without entering into a personal connexion with the theatre was so infinitesimal, that to be a dramatic author it was all but inevitably necessary to become at the same time an actor, or at least a member of a theatrical company. The learned Lyly might pine for the dignified office of superintendent of the dramatic entertainments of the Court; Peele found it difficult to exist as the managing *factotum* of royal and noblemen's entertainments; but probably Peele himself, certainly Marlowe, Lodge, Wilson, Munday, and others, were actors. This combination, while it affected the course of the lives of most of these dramatists, at the same time directly influenced the character of their works. It taught with incomparable certainty a keen insight into the laws of dramatic cause and effect, and gave warm vitality to a dramatic literature produced, as the phrase is, for immediate consumption. On the other hand, it as inevitably constituted rapidity of workmanship an indispensable element in the capacity of a successful playwright. Marvellous as is the productivity of many of these dramatists, and still more marvellous as it would appear were we aware of all they wrote, it was not more marvellous than it was from the nature of the case unavoidable. *How* a play was produced, how many hands had been at work upon it, what loans and what spoliations had occurred in the process, must ordinarily have seemed of less moment than *whether* it was produced, and whether it succeeded. It was not literary criticism, but the verdict of popular applause, which was in the first instance challenged. Plays were written to be acted; and plays were acted to please. For a dramatist to 'know his art and not his trade' would have struck his fellow-actors and authors as a more than doubtful boast. The play was the property of the company; and exposed to any alterations and 'additions,' which, while they 'made' it on the stage, might 'mar' it, as in the case of *Faustus*, for all future ages. This simple consideration accounts at once for many of the merits, and for many of the faults, common to so much of the dramatic literature discussed in this chapter.

Results of the conditions of production upon the plays themselves.

Summary of the history of the stage in the earlier Elisabethan period.

It therefore becomes necessary to recall, however briefly, the condition of the English stage in this period of our dramatic literature. In it the stage had, in the full sense of the term, become a popular institution. The dignity implied in this expression is however well known to be of a varying character. The profession of an actor had become very common some time before the commencement of this period; but while all unauthorised players had by statute[1] been declared 'rogues and vagabonds,' there were many worthy people who would gladly have seen the same term, and its legal consequences, applied to all players whatsoever. But the temporary success of a Puritan metropolitan (Archbishop Grindall, Spenser's 'good Algrind') in inhibiting the performance of plays for one year, by way of penance on the appearance of the plague in London in 1563[2], had in the next decennium been followed by the grant of a royal patent to the company of the nobleman who was regarded as the head of the Puritanising party. From the 7th of May, 1574, the Earl of Leicester's servants were empowered to play 'Comedies, Tragedies, Interludes, Stage-plays, and such other like as they have already used and studied or hereafter shall use and studye, as well for the recreacion of our' (the Queen's) 'loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to se them[3].' The City authorities opposed the exercise of this right; and their efforts were in so far successful, that the players established play-houses outside the City jurisdiction. One was established by James Burbadge (a member of Leicester's company) in rooms near a house occupied by the Lord Chamberlain in the precinct of the dissolved monastery of the Blackfriars (1576), two others ('the Theatre' and 'the Curtain') in Shoreditch. The Rose, Hope, and Swan theatres, on the Bankside (Southwark), were opened either shortly before or after 1581[4]. Yet it is clear, from the reopening of disputes between the Privy Council and the civic autho-

[1] *viz.* that quoted from Collier in note 2 to p. 244. [2] Collier, i. 158.
[3] The Patent is printed at length by Collier, i. 211–212.
[4] Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841), p. 5.



rities in 1581, that plays were exhibited 'in' as well as 'about' the City. In 1583 the Queen gave a genuine encouragement to the players by selecting twelve performers to be called the Queen's players,—among them Robert Wilson (the elder) and Richard Tarlton the famous clown [1]. These players were of course quite distinct from the boys or 'children of Paul's,' Westminster, Windsor, and the Chapel Royal, and the 'children of the Queen's Revels' (among whom boys were freely impressed after a warrant issued in 1585). These children acted several of the plays mentioned in this and in a later chapter; and their competition was much felt by the regular actors [2].

Attacks upon the stage.

Encouraged by royal and noble patronage, and by a popularity among the lower orders which must have been continuously on the increase, the stage treated with open derision the efforts of the Puritan authorities of the City to stay its influence, and if possible to extinguish its life [3]. In these efforts the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were beyond a doubt prompted by an earnest hatred of what seemed to them a nursery of licence and disorder. Opposition to the stage on grounds such as these had never ceased. Northbrooke and the penitent Gosson were followed

[1] Collier, i. 255. Of Tarlton a full account will be found in Mr. J. O. Halliwell's *Introduction to Tarlton's Jests*, and *News out of Purgatory* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1844). Cf. a note to Chalmers' *Life of Hall* (English Poets, v. 254). He was a 'prentice in his youth' of the city of London, and apparently afterwards earned a living as a 'water-bearer.' On the stage he became famous as a clown, and was specially celebrated for his extemporal rhyming and his 'jigs,'—*i. e.* ludicrous songs, often accompanied by a dance, introduced by the clown and invented by him. Tarlton's popularity knew no bounds, neither did his audacity. 'The year 1588,' says Mr. Halliwell, 'witnessed the Spanish Armada, and the death of Tarlton; and the latter circumstance long continued to be remembered by the other.' A warm tribute is paid to him in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (probably written shortly after his decease). The authenticity of the 'Jests' is of course entirely matter of belief; the *News out of Purgatory* was doubtless published with his name by way of catchpenny. Tarlton was not forgotten even a generation after his death; see the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), and the epitaph of the year 1617, quoted by Waldron in his edition of *The Sad Shepherd*, p. 167, where he is apostrophised as the 'Lord of Mirth,' while 'all clownes since' are said to have been 'his apes.'

[2] Collier, i. 265; *The English Drama and Stage, &c.*, 1543-1664, *illustrated by Documents, Treatises and Poems* (Roxburghe Library, 1869), p. 33; and cf. Preface to Clark and Wright's edition of *Hamlet*, p. xv.

[3] See *e. g.* Tarlton's jig sung at the Curtain; in Halliwell's *Introd.*, p. xx *seqq.*

by Philip Stubbes, who published his *Anatomy of Abuses*, including a division headed '*Of Stage-plays and Interludes, with their wickedness*,' in 1583. Whetstone, himself previously a dramatic author, followed with his *Touchstone for the Time* in 1584; and William Rankins, who *afterwards* took to writing plays, in 1587[1]. The contest against the stage continued, as will be noticed hereafter, throughout the reigns of Elisabeth and her successor; nor has it ever ceased except when there was no stage left to attack.

The stage on its defence.

The players and playwrights had, as we have seen, not been idle in the defence of their craft. The virulence of their opponents only increased their audacity, until at last the outbreak of a controversy originally unconnected with the stage gave them an opportunity of throwing themselves with unprecedented boldness into the offensive, and identifying themselves with the cause of an ally whose sympathy with the theatre can only have been of a very limited description.

The Marprelate controversy (1588–9).

With the most famous literary quarrel of these libellous times[2], the Martin-Marprelate controversy, the dramatists and the stage were brought into active connexion, as it would seem, in the first instance from private causes. It appears to have suggested itself to Greene, Lyly, and Nash to charge their adversary Gabriel Harvey with the authorship of one of the earlier Martinist pamphlets; and thus Lyly and Nash soon became involved in the thick of the fray. At the same time, the instincts of the playwriters as well as their interests must naturally have ranged them among the opponents of a faction whose victory, as they well knew, meant their ruin.

The details of the Marprelate controversy, many of which are, and probably will always remain, involved in

[1] Cf. the Introduction to Gosson's *School of Abuse* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1841), pp. ix-x. Stubbes' *Observations* are extracted in the Roxburghe Library publication cited on p. 249.

[2] 'Do you not see these Pamphlets, Libels, Rhimes,
These strange confused Tumults of the Mind,
Are grown to be the Sickness of these Times,
The great Disease inflicted on Mankind.'
Daniel's *Musophilus* (1599).



obscurity, need not concern us here[1]. Whoever were the authors of the first blow struck in this contest, which was but the climax of an epidemic of controversy[2], its intellectual father was Cartwright, though he was not among its martyrs. Professing to answer a work published in defence of the government of the Church of England by Dr. Bridges, Dean of Salisbury, the authors of *Martin Mar-Prelate's Epistle to the Terrible Priests of the Convocation House*, which was printed, probably towards the end of 1588, as it is conjectured at Middleburg in Zealand[3], at once went to the extreme of libellous scurrility, inveighing against the bishops of the Church as knaves and dunces, and resorting to every kind of charge in order to involve them in the hatred and contempt of the well-informed and ill-informed public alike. The subsequent publications of the same secret club of authors, *Martin Mar-Prelate's Epitome* (1588), *Hay ye any work for the Cooper*[4], and the rest, are, in so far as I am acquainted with them, similar reckless expectorations of spleen, designed and fitted for nothing but the worst end of all public controversy—the excitement of the mob.

The spirit which gave rise to these attacks had been provoked by the unintelligent indifference of the Government to views of Church government which it was no longer politic to ignore or to treat as the vagaries of a

[1] A rather discursive account of it will be found in Disraeli's *Quarrels of Authors*, vol. ii. pp. 203–282. Cf. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. ii. p. 336 *seqq.*, and Maskell's *History of the M. M. Controversy* (1845). Much information may be gleaned from the collection of *Puritan Discipline Tracts*, of which the reprinting and the spread to America are deeply regretted by Mr. Maskell, on the principle that 'poison' should not be sold without its 'antidote.'

[2] Cf. Maskell, p. 25, and the long list of Puritan tracts, from 1570, quoted there from the Puritan printer Waldegrave's *Parte of a Register*.

[3] See Introduction to the edition in the above-mentioned collection (1843). The epistle itself is dated 'at my Castle between two Walls, neither foure dayes from peniless benche, nor yet at the West ende of Shrofftide; but the foureteenth yeare at the least, at the age of Charing crosse, within a yeare of Midsommer, betweene twelue and twelue of the clocke. Anno pontificatus vestri Quinto, and I hope *vltimo* of all Englishe Popes.'

[4] Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, had—with doubtful discretion—written a serious reply, entitled *An Admonition to the People of England*, and moreover, as Disraeli points out, presented the inestimable advantage of a name to be punned upon.

despicable minority. Oppressive measures had produced their natural fruit; but when this had shot up in rank abundance, the authorities found themselves unable to cope with an invisible enemy. The prohibition of the Marprelate tracts proved wholly futile. The printing-press of the Martinists was moved from place to place with uncontrollable rapidity, until at last it was seized,—it is said, in Manchester. Without the Puritan writers being hereby silenced[1], prosecutions ensued which led to the death of some of those[2] involved in the suspicion of having written some of the obnoxious pamphlets, and to the imprisonment and fining of others. The movement, thus stopped, was certain to revive in a different form, and with different results.

In this controversy, however, upon the more important aspects of which I must not dwell, the railing had not all been on the side of the 'Martin-mongers[3].' The prelates and their cause had found advocates among writers who were fully prepared to meet a whole company of 'Martins[4]' on their own ground. Lyly and Nash were probably at first drawn into the controversy by personal motives; but the *Pappe with an Hatchet* of the former, and a whole series of tracts by the latter, among them the *Return of the renowned Cavaliero*, *Pasquil of England* and *An Almond for a Parrat*, turned the stream of ridicule upon the assailants of the episcopate. Munday, too, seems to have done service on the same side[5]. Lastly, the stage itself

[1] The *Protestation of Martin Mar-Prelate* appeared immediately after the seizure. The *Dialogue, &c.* followed, and the *Theses* of 'Martin junior.' The last tract, thought to be plainly from one of the original hands in the controversy, was *The Just Censure and Reproof.* Maskell, pp. 128, 141, 148, 151.

[2] Penry was hanged; Udall died in prison. These, with Field and Job Throckmorton, appear to have been the principal Martinists.

[3] So Lyly calls them in the *Pappe with an Hatchet.*

[4] I use the neutral expression 'company;' the Anti-Martinists would have said 'herd;' for they were not oblivious of the circumstance that 'Martin' was the popular name for the loudest-voiced of domestic animals.

[5] At least in *An Almond for a Parrat* 'Martin' is bidden to 'beware *Anthony Munday* be not euen with you for calling him Iudas, and lay open your false carding to the stage of all mens scorne.' (*Puritan Discipline Tracts* edition, p. 52.) As to the *Returne of Pasquill*, see Maskell, p. 177 *seqq.* *Plaine Percevall*, as the same writer shows, was a late effort in favour of quiet on the

had at an early date in the controversy been made use of by the opponents of Martin-Marprelate; and, by 1589, a play in the nature of a morality had been exhibited in derision of the adversaries of the Establishment[1]. The Master of the Revels (Edmund Tylney) having made an adverse representation to the Lord Treasurer (Burghley) in consequence, the latter wrote to the Lord Mayor, requiring him to put a stop to all theatrical exhibitions within his jurisdiction. This requisition was of course responded to with alacrity by the chief magistrate of the city, who immediately consigned two refractory players 'to one of the Compters;' and six days afterwards (Nov. 12th, 1589) the Privy Council took the necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of the offence. The Archbishop of Canterbury was required to name 'a person well learned in divinity,' and the Lord Mayor 'a sufficient person learned and of judgment,' who together with the Master of the Revels were to license all plays acted in and about the City. From the letters issued by the Privy Council on this occasion it would appear that 'certen matters of Divinytie and State' had been 'handled' in more than one play of the day. The stoppage of stage-plays was accordingly only temporary; but the 'comedies' against Martin-Marprelate, whether written or in preparation, had to be laid aside, greatly to Lyly's regret, who thought they would have 'decyphered, and so perhaps discouraged' the enemy. Nor was his playful proposal of a 'Tragedie,' in which

Martin-Marprelate on the stage (1589).

Prohibitory and restrictive measures (1589).

Puritan side, and has been most absurdly attributed to Nash. There seems every likelihood of its having been written, as Nash asserts in his *Strange Newes*, by Richard Harvey. See Introd. to *Puritan Discipline Tracts* edition, where the origin of the quarrel between the Harveys and the dramatists (Lyly and Nash in particular) is accounted for.

[1] This piece is thus described by Nash in his *Returne of Pasquill* (1589): 'Methought *Vetus Comoedia* began to pricke him at London in the right vaine, when shee brought foorth *Divinitie* with a scratcht face, holding of her hart, as if she were sicke, because *Martin* would have forced her; but myssing of his purpose, he left the print of his nayles upon her cheekes, and poysoned her with a vomit, which he ministred unto her to make her cast uppe her dignities and promotions.' Collier, i. 273. Lyly in the *Pappe with an Hatchet* seems to describe the same, or a similar, play when he says (of Martin): 'He shall not be brought in as whilom he was, and yet verie well, with a cocks combe, an apes face, a wolfe's bellie, cats clawes,' &c. Quoted by Maskell, p. 210.

'*Mardocheus*' should play 'a Bishoppe,' and Martin 'Hamman,' ever carried into execution[1].

Danger of a degradation of the stage.

The general result of the attempt to make the stage a vehicle of political abuse and invective was beyond a doubt to contribute to coarsen and degrade it. There are other signs about this time of a downward tendency in the tone of the theatre; the performances of the very children of Paul's were stopped about 1591, and suspended for several years, on account of the personal abuse and scurrility put into the mouths of these youthful actors[2]. The true remedy was at last applied, or it applied itself, when from about the year 1594 the chief London actors became divided into two great rival companies,—the Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's,—which alone received licences. Instead of half-a-dozen or more companies without a character to maintain or lose, attached to the households of great nobles, there were now two established bodies of actors, directed by steady and, in the full sense of the word, respectable men[3]. In 1597–8 a third company, which endeavoured to establish itself by the side of them, was suppressed by order of the Privy Council; and in the year 1600 their joint monopoly was confirmed[4]. Though

The monopoly of two companies established (1594–1600).

[1] See *Pappe with an Hatchet*, p. 32; and *Note*, pp. 47–50, where the quotations are from Collier, i. 271–277. It seems highly probable that the cause of Shakspere's ceasing from writing comedies at this time, which Spenser is thought to imply in a well-known passage in his *Teares of the Muses*, written about this time, was the prevalence of a taste for plays of a more or less political or controversial character. Spenser describes the stage as degraded and 'the fair scene with rudenes foule disguized;' and very likely had in his mind the very 'common plays and enterludes' which the measures of the Privy Council were designed to stop, and which, if displaying a bitterly Anti-Puritan spirit, must have been offensive to his opinions as well as to his tastes. With reference to Shakspere, Mr. Knight discovered a document, in which 'Shakspere, and some twenty of his fellow-players, disclaim their having been concerned in any of these objectionable representations.' Knight's *Shakspere, a Biography*, p. 342; quoted by Maskell, p. 210.

[2] Collier, i. 280; Clark and Wright, *u. s.*, p. xiv.

[3] See the Introduction to the first number of Mr. R. Simpson's *School of Shakespeare* (containing *A Larum for London, or The Seige of Antwerp*), 1872; a publication which it is to be hoped will not be allowed to lapse for want of support.

[4] Collier, i. 312. Another statute against 'common players' was passed in 1597–8. See *The English Drama, &c.* (Roxburghe Library), p. 37.

this restriction was not absolutely maintained, the history of the Elisabethan drama proper from the close of the period more immediately under discussion connects itself with that of the two theatrical companies just mentioned. To the Lord Chamberlain's company, which was first settled at the Blackfriars and afterwards—in 1596—built the Globe on the Bankside, Shakspere and Richard Burbadge belonged; the Lord Admiral's was managed by Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn, and was ultimately —in 1599—settled at the Fortune in Golding-Lane[1].

Influence of this event upon dramatic authorship.

These brief notes on the history of the English stage need be carried no farther for our present purpose. So long as a number of companies existed, so long as the two most prominent among them were for a time united in so far at least as to play in the same house, the dramatic authors appear to have worked indiscriminately for the wants of many of these companies or of all; the quickest worker was likely to find the most constant employment, and a claim to property in a play must have been as difficult to maintain as a desire for originality must have been rare in dramatic authorship. Hence the famous accusation of Greene against Shakspere—as ordinarily interpreted—may have been well founded, but was in any case absurd. The difficulty in deciding as to the priority of different plays on the same subject is accordingly endless, and it is often futile to endeavour to solve it. But when the two great rival companies were established in a virtual monopoly of the London stage, it became possible for them, in the words of a recent writer[2], 'to establish a history and a character of their own.' Thus,

[1] Henslowe's *Diary*, which extends over the years from 1591-1602 and is an invaluable aid to dramatic chronology, showing 'not only the number of times different plays were acted, but generally *the very day when they were acted for the first time*,' has been edited by Mr. Collier for the *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.* (1845). To Mr. Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* I have already made several references. The founder of Dulwich College was born in 1566, and died in 1626. There is no satisfactory proof that he was a dramatic author, but as an actor he attained to the highest reputation. It is improbable that he ever performed in any of Shakspere's plays; on the other hand, he 'created,' as the French say, the characters of Orlando (in Greene's *O. Furioso*), of Tamburlaine, and of Barabas.

[2] Mr. R. Simpson, *u. s.*, p. iv.

in this important respect too, was Shakspere favoured by circumstances—partly of course of his own making—beyond his predecessors.

Mutual relations among the actor-authors.

Among the members of the acting profession, with which dramatic authorship was as we have seen so intimately connected, a kindly mutual good-will must have, as at all times, so more especially under such conditions of existence, perpetually striven for the mastery with eager competition. So peculiar are under any circumstances the conditions of an actor's life, that the greatest allowances should at all times be made for foibles which are nearly inevitable; and there is no profession whose records are so full of memorials of friendly generosity and brotherly kindness, in the midst of endless jealousies. When to the rivalry of actors was added that of authors, when bread and fame were simultaneously involved in the question of comparative success, we may forgive even a Greene his attack upon a Shakspere. The general kindliness of tone which prevailed among the rival actors and authors is shown by many incidental touches of feeling;—no outward sign remains to display it more pleasantly than the familiar usage of abbreviating the Christian names of managers, actors, and authors. Even an eager follower of 'sweete Nedde' (Edward Alleyn), while sneering at 'Rossius Richard' (Burbadge), disarms our disapproval of his jealous partisanship when he declares that when Ned acts,

> 'Willes newe playe
> Shall be rehearst some other daye,'—

while at a rather later date, Thomas Heywood, the dramatist who so chivalrously broke a lance in defence of the actor's art, testified in a score of genial lines, which I will permit myself to quote here, to this memorable method of preserving the memory of good fellowship:

> 'Greene, who had in both Academies ta'ne
> Degree of Master, yet could never gaine
> To be call'd more than *Robin;* who, had he
> Profest aught but the Muse, serv'd and been free
> After a seven yeares' prenticeship, might have
> (With credit too) gone Robert to his grave.
> Marlo, renowned for his rare art and wit,
> Could ne're attaine beyond the name of *Kit,*

Although his Hero and Leander did
Merit addition rather. Famous Kid
Was called but *Tom*. *Tom* Watson, though he wrote
Able to make Apollo's selfe to dote
Upon his Muse, for all that he could strive,
Yet never could to his full name arrive.
Tom Nash (in his time of no small esteeme)
Could not a second syllable redeeme.
Excellent Bewmont, in the foremost ranke
Of the rar'st wits, was never more than *Franck*.
Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill
Commanded mirth or passion, was but *Will*;
And famous Johnson, though his learned pen
Be dipt in Castaly, is still but *Ben*.
Fletcher and Webster, of that learned packe
None of the mean'st, yet neither was but *Jacke*.
Dekker's but *Tom*; nor May nor Middleton;
And he's now but *Jacke* Foord that once was John[1].'

Before quitting the subject of the stage, as connected h the dramatic literature of this period, it is worth while advert in passing to a question which has only recently ived the attention it merits. The English stage and literature were at this time still largely subject to an uence of considerable significance for the future his- of the latter, if not of the former. I have adverted dentally to the attention directed by at least one Eng- dramatist (Kyd) to the performances of Italian actors England[2]; and the continued influence of the Italian ma as well as of Italian and Spanish prose fiction upon own dramatic literature will receive abundant illus- ion as we proceed. Until recently, it had been less embered that in this period a lively connexion prevailed he drama between England and Germany.

Intercourse between the German and the English stage.

English actors had visited the Continent in the train of

From T. Heywood's *Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, quoted in the Introd. is *Apology for Actors*, *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.* 1841. It is perhaps worth re- ing that this use of abbreviations is not *necessarily* to be understood as ying kind feeling. See Chapman, *The Gentleman Usher* (iii. 1):

'Nor yet call me Lord,
Nor my whole name Vincentio; but Vince,
As they calle Jacke or Will, 'tis now in use,
'Twixt men of no equality or kindnesse.'

The extempore acting of French and Italian players is described, evidently n personal experience, by Middleton, *The Spanish Gipsy* (iv. 2).

English bishops as early as 1417, when they played before the dignitaries assembled at the Council of Constance; and thus had begun a connexion between the stages and early dramatic literatures of England and Germany destined to exercise the most enduring influence. In the sixteenth century, in the reign of Elisabeth, it was customary for German and Dutch princes to visit England; and the English stage necessarily attracted much of their attention. One of them—in 1596—speaks of four play-houses in London (there were really at least seven); the tutor of another mentions the theatres 'without the city' and their numerous audiences. On the other hand, Germany and the Netherlands were from the middle of the same century visited by English musicians and other entertainers in large numbers; and it is certain that Leicester was accompanied by one if not more players when in 1585 he went over to the Netherlands to dazzle their inhabitants by his magnificence,—and to disgust them by his impotence. In 1586 five Englishmen who had been sent by Leicester to King Frederick II of Denmark transferred their services to the Court of Christian I, Elector of Saxony; they are called 'instrumentalists,' but there were actors among them[1], or they were all actors as well as musicians. Finally, a whole company of English actors crossed the seas under the leadership of Robert Browne in 1590, and after visiting Holland, Zealand, and Friesland, repaired to Germany to exercise their profession. This was probably the company, members of which performed at Wolfenbüttel before Duke Henry Julius of Brunswick-Lüneburg in the years 1602 to 1617, and probably earlier[2]. In 1617 English comedians entered the service of the Elector of Brandenburg.

These facts, established on indisputable evidence[3], prove

[1] Thomas Pope and George Bryan, both of whom appeared on the London stage before 1588, and were afterwards members of the Blackfriars company with Shakspere.

[2] The Brunswick exchequer accounts are missing from 1590–1601. The reign of Henry Julius extended from 1589–1613. His plays have been recently published (1855).

[3] In A. Cohn's *Shakespeare in Germany in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (1865). See also the first chapter of R. Genée's *Geschichte der Shakespeare'schen Dramen*

the existence, already in the period of Shakspere's predecessors, of a close intercourse between the German and the English stage. This intercourse only reflected in a special way the intimate connexion which the political as well as the literary results of the Reformation had brought about between England and Protestant Germany. The alliance which Henry VIII had shrunk from drawing closely, had been inevitably concluded by the peoples. The Reformers of Edward's reign and the refugees of Mary's had derived much of their intellectual nourishment from German sources; who would have thought that the poor play-actors were to begin the repayment of the debt[1]? Yet so it was; for although the beginnings of a new German dramatic literature were to prove abortive as an important national growth, they were not unproductive of remarkable literary fruits; and after the days of desolation had passed, German literature was to draw strength from ours in the very quarter where Henry Julius of Brunswick and Jacob Ayrer had joined hands with contemporary English dramatists.

It is not, however, of the influence of the English drama upon the German that I have here to speak. On the other hand, the counter-influence of German writers and German subjects, brought home with them by the English comedians, or set in motion by means of their travels, was not inconsiderable. We have seen an instance of it in a work of Marlowe's, and we shall have to return to the subject in connexion with more than one of the plays of Shakspere and his times. Whatever may be the value of the evidence in the case of particular plays, the intercourse adverted to connected our stage and our dramatic literature in their youthful days with those of a nation akin to our own not only in blood and speech, but in the

in Deutschland (1870), and K. Elze's Introduction to his edition of Chapman's *Alphonsus* (Leipzig, 1867).

[1] Of Ralph Radclif's tragedy of *The Burning of John Huss*, which might be regarded as directly connecting the German Reformation with the English drama, it is neither known whether it was in English or Latin, or whether it was founded on the German tragedy by J. Agricola. Radclif flourished under Edward VI, and is mentioned by Bishop Bale in his *Script. Illustr. Catal.* Cf. Elze, *u. s.*, pp. 16–17.

spirit of its moral and intellectual, as well as of its political developement.

The profession of actor and playwright had in the period of which I am speaking gradually become one which by prudence and care might be made a profitable pursuit; the degree of respectability attaching to it depended entirely upon the individual. The permanent establishment of two chief companies, however, of course operated in the direction of giving certainty of income, and therewith a sense of settled citizenship, to their members. And at the close of our period the stage, whose fortunes I shall not now further pursue, was becoming the habitual resort of the young nobility and the leaders of intellectual progress as well as mere fashion. Criticism on the part of the audience, which was in its cruder forms so deeply to vex Ben Jonson's soul, was doubtless still in its infancy; but some healthy influences must have been derived both from the more aristocratic spectators, as they sat upon the stage, with pages attending upon them with tobacco and pipes, and even from the 'grounded judgment and grounded capacities' of the much-abused tenants of the roofless and rush-strewn pit. To describe the externals of the stage is no part of my task; and it must suffice to note only one or two circumstances, as directly bearing upon the composition of the Elisabethan plays. In the first place, the construction and decorations of the stage were of so extreme a simplicity that constant 'change of scene' neither required any effort on the part of the manager, nor interfered with the enjoyment of the audience. It was effected by drawing up and down the curtain, which covered the inner part of the stage only. On the front part it was requisite for all personages (dead or alive) to be removed before a change of scene could be supposed to occur; similarly no personages could be 'discovered' there in the middle of an act. Hence it became necessary for the dramatists, in a very different degree from writers for the stage of later days, to make each situation complete from beginning to end. On the other hand, the constant nominal change of scene was not, in the degree in which it appears such to

The externals of the stage.

the modern reader and would certainly be such to the modern spectator, a constant interruption to the progress of the action[1]. The imaginative powers of the spectators, consistently kept on the stretch, were thus not enfeebled by any adventitious aids worth mentioning. In the second place, as plays were acted in the afternoon, the performance had to be compressed into a short space of time; Shakspere speaks of the 'two hours' traffic of our stage[2],' but probably a rather more liberal measure of time may have been ordinarily allowed. The fact that plays were performed at these hours of the day is likewise significant as indicating the usual composition of a theatrical audience; for the busy citizens could hardly have made a practice of deserting their shops, even if they could have waived principles. Thus the regular frequenters of the theatre could not but chiefly belong to the idler sections of the population. The prices of admission too seem to have been well adapted to the needs of 'habitual' playgoers. Finally, no respectable woman might appear at a playhouse except with her face concealed under a mask; a circumstance which, were it not for later experience, would help to account in return for the emphatically unveiled character of much which offends modern susceptibility in our Elisabethan drama. Nor will it be forgotten that women's parts were invariably acted by boys,—a practice which, strange as it may seem to us, was in intention at

The theatrical public.

[1] Cf. Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas*, pp. 157 *seqq.* I may add that these considerations justify the accommodation of Shakspere's plays to the conditions of the modern stage, to which, so long as it is conducted with loyal moderation and real dramatic tact, only pedants will object.

[2] In the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*. In Davies' sonnet *In Fuscum* (Ellis's *Specimens*, ii. 37) the man of fashion

> 'first doth rise at ten, and at eleven
> He goes to Gill's where he doth eat till one,
> Then sees a play *till six* and sups at seven;
> And after supper straight to bed is gone,
> And there till ten next day he doth remain,
> And then he dines and sees a comedy,
> And then he sups and goes to bed again,
> Thus runs he round without variety'—

but also, doubtless, at so leisurely a pace that the timing of his 'movements' need not be taken quite literally.

least owing to a sense of propriety. It constituted at the same time one more demand upon the imaginative capacities of the spectator[1].

But these details, and others of the same kind, though none of them without their significance, must be left to the historians of the stage. After thus briefly adverting to so much of its history in this period as was necessary for an illustration of the conditions under which the predecessors of Shakspere (as well as at the beginning of his professional life Shakspere himself) worked, it may be permissible to endeavour, in conclusion, to draw the sum of their literary achievements. For, as it seems to me, in literary criticism the consideration of outward conditions and circumstances is mainly valuable insofar as it clears the ground for the consideration of what remains behind. If anything remains behind, it is there we have to seek for the creation, not of time and place, but of the real mainspring of enduring works of literary or any other art—original genius.

The measure of original genius in Shakspere's predecessors. Lyly.

Not all, or nearly all, the dramatic works of Shakspere's predecessors will bear this crucial test. Lyly, unless a pleasing lyrical gift be thought worthy of being taken into account, has been justly described as 'a *bel esprit*, but no poet[2].' Wit, ingenuity, and reading he possessed and displayed in abundance; but even the extreme mannerism of style identified with the name of his famous prose-romances, and reappearing in all his dramatic works, was not of his own invention. The dexterity with which he moved in the elaborate fetters which he had in this respect imposed upon

[1] Freytag, *u. s.*, p. 159. The well-known practice is humorously treated in the Induction to *The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington*. When 'the boys' come forward among the players, Skelton remarks:

'What, our maid Marian, leaping like a lad!'

Julia's pretty pretence of having been made 'to play the woman's part' in the 'pageants of delight' 'at Pentecost' will be remembered (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iv. 4).

[2] Ulrici, *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art*, p. 36, where it is well added that 'while Tieck is right in maintaining that the commentators of Shakspeare have much to learn from Lyly, the assertion of Schlegel is equally true, that Shakspeare himself can have learned little if anything from him.'

himself excited the admiration and seemed to challenge the rivalry of his contemporaries, but the progress of the national drama, as a branch of poetic literature, was, except in the domestication of prose-dialogue on the stage, impeded rather than advanced by the father of euphuism. He has no claim to be regarded as occupying such a position towards the great Elisabethan dramatists, as *e.g.* Wieland (to whose literary tastes his own have a certain resemblance) holds towards the great classics of modern German poetic literature. Virtuosity in a vicious style confers no title to any but a historical remembrance. More deplorable as an aberration from the true principles of poetic creation, though less productive of harm by provoking imitators, than his mannerism of style, was Lyly's treatment of his subjects. He ciphered personal allegories with so profound a skill on the background of classical mythology, that only the amateur detectives of literary criticism will ever derive a thorough enjoyment from the study of his plays. A curious learning alone can find the key; but when it is found it unlocks no secrets of genius. In this direction he doubtless taught something to the mask-writers of his own age as well as of subsequent generations; but nothing to the legitimate drama. The influence of Lyly is traceable in most of his contemporaries, and even in Shakspere himself; but, with the exception noted above, it affected only the transitory elements in their creations. Happily, the conditions of the poetic art are such that this kind of influences vanishes from sight, as our attention fixes itself upon more vital and more significant characteristics. Thus the temple of the Elisabethan drama is no more vitiated by the extravagances of Lyly than St. Peter's at Rome is by the meretricious beauties of Bernini.

Dramatic literature before these writers.

It was not by exaggerating in the direction of artificiality the traditions of our earlier drama that the predecessors of Shakspere began to make the dramatic department of our literature the most glorious of all its branches. What they found was a drama which, though popular in the main source of its origin, was artificial by reason of its imitation

of a limited class of models, while at the same time it was still crude and inadequate in form. Tragedy had attached itself to the footsteps of Seneca and his Italian followers in choice of subjects and in method of construction; it was essentially epical in its treatment, the lyrical elements being not organically connected with the epical; it occupied itself, so to speak, with the statement of an action rather than with its developement out of the characters of the agents. Such was the essential nature of most of the tragedies described in my second chapter, from *Gorboduc* to *Tancred and Gismund*, from *Promos and Cassandra* to *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. The hopeful beginnings of the historical drama on national subjects, the *Chronicle Histories*, had from the nature of the case even more emphatically exhibited the same characteristics. On the other hand, they had in comparative warmth and energy of manner surpassed plays the subjects of which lacked the same connexion with the national consciousness, and which moved in the less congenial sphere of Classical history and legend, or of foreign romance. Comedy was still hovering between the imitation of a late Classical type, the reproduction of 'Italian devises,' the use of the old mythological and revived pastoral machinery, and the irrepressible desire to introduce, with the incidental ease which comedy hardly ever fails to permit, types of existing manners and of the enduring varieties of human character. Where tragedy and comedy had been combined, their union had been of a perfunctory nature; and tragicomedy, or (as Daniel writes it) 'tragic comedy,' was an avowed hybrid, manifestly exhibiting an imperfect developement of species.

Their preference for heroic tragedy.

The genius of the predecessors of Shakspere threw itself with more especial ardour upon the advancement of the tragic stage. The greatness of the times made this inevitable to poetic capacities of a powerful cast. As the genius of Æschylus was in sympathy with the mighty movement of the great Persian wars, so Marlowe and his fellows, but Marlowe pre-eminently, claimed for tragedy the full grandeur of heroic themes. A vast canvas seemed needed for such purposes; and it was spread with no faltering hand

by the authors of *Tamerlane* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, of *The Battle of Alcazar* and *The Wounds of Civil War*. Nor could subjects of national history fail to commend themselves to a constantly increasing sympathy and to be treated with a new vigour and impetus; in the hands of Peele and Marlowe, at all events, the Chronicle History made a mighty stride in advance towards historical tragedy; and of the early Histories ascribed to Shakspere, the world is still in doubt whether they were written by him or by his 'predecessors.' However this may be, in the national historical drama of the English stage there is no gulf, there is hardly a gap, to interrupt its onward course. In this branch of their endeavours, the group of writers under discussion were fully adequate to the progressive demands of their literary task.

Sameness and limitation of their tragic themes.

But to return. The choice of great themes, of which *Tamerlane* set the example, in the first instance rather favoured than discouraged an epical manner of treatment, which the dramatic reproduction of the Chronicles seemed to make absolutely inevitable. The contemplation of actions mighty in their dimensions and marvellous in their results overpowered reflexion on their causes, and a patient developement of events as the exemplification of moral laws. To will and to achieve seemed the sum of heroic action; to undertake and to fail the full significance of a tragic catastrophe. Marlowe's fiery genius inspired in him a poetic sympathy with passionate resolve, with victorious achievement, with fatal failure. Life in its heroic aspect seemed a struggle of man against fate,—it might be said, against the conditions of human life itself. In a less impassioned degree, the view which the other dramatists—Kyd *e.g.* and Peele—took of the tragic conflict between heroism and circumstance is of the same kind.

Their extravagance in treatment.

Herein they saw but half—and only the lesser half—of the significance of true tragic effect. They knew how to mark with drastic force the great conditions of the conflict, how to express with overpowering energy the terror of the catastrophe. Hence the aberration, which needs no exemplification, towards the horrible as a source of effect.

Marlowe's want of humour made him a prominent offender in this direction; but there is little to choose between his worst extravagances and the gratification of the same morbid taste as that which prompted them in *Titus Andronicus*[1]. But the dramatists of this period had not learnt the twin great lessons taught by the highest examples of the tragic art. They had not learnt that 'vehement passion does not suffice to render a poetic a dramatic character[2];' they had not learnt that in the connexion between the causation of a tragic conflict and its solution lies the really purifying force of its presentment.

Defective characterisation.

The former defect was the result of an artistic, the latter of a moral which was at the same time an artistic, imperfection. The art of dramatic characterisation, if I may use the expression, in which lies the chief and crowning greatness of Shakspere, was not inherited by him from his predecessors, though in some of them—notably in Greene—there are proofs of its gradual growth. The conflict not between man's power and his will, but between his nature and his will, is the real subject of the noblest dramatic art. Marlowe's Faustus perishes because he attempts more than it is allowed to human skill to attempt; Hamlet, because his will imposes on him a task to which his nature is unequal. What Marlowe only vaguely felt, that his hero was the author of his own catastrophe, Shakspere clearly perceived and distinctly expressed. The study of character is the indispensable condition of its depiction as a dramatic reality. Marlowe is too impatient to advance the action of his play to develope it out of its characters. Sometimes, as in the *Jew of Malta*, he begins with a perceptible endeavour; sometimes, as in the *Massacre*, he eschews all efforts in this direction altogether. Of the other contemporary dramatists, Greene, though his hand is lighter, yet displays a more certain touch. He had learnt more from comedy than his

[1] Hence *Tamerlane* is not unfairly treated by Hall in his well-known *Satire* (i. 3) as the type of contemporary tragedy, with its 'huff-cap terms and thundering threats.'

[2] I venture thus to apply the fine criticism of Gustav Freytag on Lessing; *u. s.*, p. 223.

fellows; but in his *James of Scotland* and in other plays there is real evidence of power of characterisation.

Imperfect morality.

The cognate defect I have termed primarily a moral one, though I am convinced that in literature—as in the plastic and the pictorial arts, and in music likewise—a moral defect finds its inevitable reflexion in an artistic. Far from being unconscious of the possibility of exhibiting a dramatic action in the entirety of its moral developement,—as *Edward II*, *David and Bethsabe*, and other examples show,—these writers had not brought home to themselves, and could not therefore bring home to their audiences, the real relation between fate and human responsibility. Revenge, *e.g.*, which plays so important a part as the main dramatic motive in a large number of these tragedies, is treated as an inevitable law, as a necessity of fate[1]. Herein ancient tragedy might seem to furnish a misleading precedent; but ancient tragedy was able, which the art of Marlowe and his fellows was not, to harmonise the working of fate with the providence of the gods. For the former stood on the basis of the continuity of legend; and even within the bounds of a single trilogy (as in the Œdipodean of Sophocles, or the conjectured Promethean of Æschylus) it was possible to show that the tragic consummation is not fear but hope. Victory is the goddess appealed to at the close of more than one Greek tragedy; and there is none which preaches the dull, dead fallacy of the irresistible power of circumstance.

But, apart from the question of such precedents, the tragedy which is complete in itself can at all times indicate the solution of its conflict, so long as it allows no doubt to remain as to its real causation. The solution lies in the eternal justice of the great moral laws, vindicated by the suffering productive of pity and terror which their violation brings forth. Who can fail to recognise this solution in *Richard III*, in *Coriolanus*, in any of Shakspere's mature tragedies; who will not seek it in vain in most of the works of his predecessors?

I have spoken of some of the main defects of these

[1] Cf. on this head Gervinus, *Shakespeare*, vol. i. p. 91.

Summary of the advance achieved in tragedy.

dramatists as tragedians; but in no spirit, I hope, of depreciation or of futile cavil. The advance which they had made, in choosing great themes for tragic treatment, in sustaining and advancing the dramatic reproduction of passages of national history, in vindicating to passion its right of adequate expression, in beginning to cultivate the art of dramatic characterisation, was, taken as a whole, enormous. If we are justified, as later dramatists seem to have instinctively felt justified [1], in treating of the age of Shakspere's predecessors as of a different one from that of Shakspere himself, we shall not, I think, regard the former as one of mere crude effort, while the latter was one of perfect consummation. Historical parallels are always dangerous; and I consider any comparison between Marlowe and Peele on the one hand, and Klinger and Lenz on the other, in their respective relations to Shakspere and to Goethe, delusive in spite of its speciousness. These young men of the *Sturm und Drang* lacked what Marlowe and his fellows possessed in splendid abundance—creative genius.

Comedy.

In comedy the advance had been less decisive; and in no branch of the drama is Shakspere's originality more marked than in the new spirit which he infused into the English comic drama, amidst difficulties to which his efforts seem to have temporarily succumbed. Lyly had done much to facilitate greater freedom of form, and something to enlarge the range of subjects; yet, on the other hand, his laborious endeavours, and those of Nash, impeded the progress of national comedy by leading as they did to the cultivation of essentially artificial species. A superabundance of wit, serviceable as it is at all times to the pamphleteer and the comic essayist, is a danger and a snare to such writers when they essay the drama. It would not be difficult to adduce modern examples of the phenomenon; but it is sufficiently attested by the instances before us. Unless the wit of the author is subordinate

Dangers of a redundance of witty dialogue.

[1] So Thos. Heywood speaks of Marlowe as 'the best of poets *in that age*,' seeming, as Mr. Collier (*Memoirs of E. Alleyn*, p. 10) points out, to imply a distinction between it and the age of Shakspere, whom he can hardly have intended to place beneath Marlowe.

to his dramatic intention, comic characterisation, in which lies the real secret of supreme comic effect, suffers at the expense of mere brilliancy, or at least scintillation, of dialogue. A peculiar danger in this respect beset our earlier dramatists in consequence of the usage allowing full license of comic extravagance to the clown, whose ambition it was to say very much more than was set down for him. Kemp and Tarlton were not 'hampered,' as a modern comic actor has humorously phrased it, by a prohibition against adding anything of their own [1].

The clowns.

The way out of the difficulty lay in the construction of suitable plots, for which a full storehouse was prepared in the popular traditions preserved in national ballads, and in the growing literature of translated foreign fiction, or of native imitations of it. In the former, Greene at least found materials for comic dramatic writing of the highest promise; Peele was perhaps nearest to him, nor should Munday's endeavours be overlooked. The aberration of the comic stage to the reproduction of political and religious controversy seemed however, at the close of this period, to be likely to extinguish the promise of the beginnings of English romantic comedy.

Beginnings of romantic comedy

threatened with extinction.

To one other point it seems necessary to advert in conclusion. In no respect had a greater advance been made by Shakspere's predecessors than in that of the outward form of dramatic composition,—in diction and versification. Here again the most effective impulse had been given by Marlowe, when in his *Tamerlane* he introduced blank verse into the popular drama. Not long before—in his translation of Ariosto's *Supposiți*—Gascoigne had given the first example of the use of prose in comedy [2], and Lyly had set the stamp of fashion upon it. The two innovations taken together supplied the adequate formal materials for Shakspere's art. So long as rhyme

Blank verse and prose.

[1] Hall in the *Satire* already cited dwells with special anger on the antics of the clown, who 'comes leaping in,' and

> 'laughs, and grins, and frames his mimic face,
> And justles straight into the prince's place.'

[2] Gervinus, *Shakespeare*, i. 98.

prevailed,—and its resistance, as has been seen, was long and obstinate,—true life which lies in continuity was impossible to dramatic diction. Marlowe still thought that each line should stand by itself, the sense marking itself off coincidently with the termination of the verse; and it was for this reason that he forged his lines with so vehement a vigour of expression. But this could only be a transitional phase of blank verse, and was so even in Marlowe himself. In his management of the metre, Shakspere surpassed his predecessors in freedom; but it was now merely a question of degree; the means themselves had been placed at his disposal by his predecessors. Nor was the free use of prose in comic passages less favourable to the emancipation of the English drama from the trammels of tradition. Lyly who used it in all his plays, although he tortured it according to the laws of his own style, did good service by establishing its right to be heard on the stage. The great masters of comic dialogue, Shakspere and Ben Jonson, knew how to profit by the inheritance.

Shakspere's predecessors deserving of individual consideration.

Much more might have been added to these concluding remarks; but enough has been I hope said to illustrate the fact which they are intended to help to establish. The Elisabethan drama before Shakspere shares with his earliest works many characteristics, and some it shares with his masterpieces themselves. No promise ever attained to such a consummation; but neither had any genius ever such predecessors. Mere incidental references are insufficient for arriving at a just estimate of any individual writer; nor is it as Shakspere's predecessors only or even chiefly that we should reverence, as they stand on their appropriate pedestals in the House of Fame, the mighty figures of Marlowe and his fellows[1].

[1] 'Tho saw I stonde on thother síde
Streight doune to the doores wide
From the deis many a pillere
Of metall, that shone not full clere,
But though they were of no richesse,
Yet more they made for great noblesse,
And in hem great sentence
And folke of hie and digne reverence.'

CHAPTER IV.

SHAKSPERE.

Shakspere not the representative of a particular age.

WE speak of a Homeric Age, thereby intending to indicate very much more than merely the age in which the Homeric poems were produced, or the age to which their narrative and descriptions relate. By the Homeric Age of Greece we mean an entire period in the history of country and people; Homer is to us the representative and the mirror of this period, as fully and thoroughly as Pericles is of another.

No such tribute has ever been paid by the most enthusiastic of his worshippers to the memory of Shakspere. A sound national instinct has preferred to designate the era of our literary as of our general history, which his name illuminates more brightly than that of any of his contemporaries, by an epithet comprehensive in its very vagueness and opportune by its very inaccuracy. In speaking of the Elisabethan Age, we think of a period of our national life animated by tendencies common to all its noteworthy forms of expression, and thus forming a whole by itself, though not of course cut off from connexion with its predecessors and its successors. Shakspere is not the microcosm of his age,—for this he was in a sense too great, and in another sense imperfectly qualified. On the one hand, a genius such as Shakspere's, be it fearlessly said though for the thousandth time, belongs to no age and to no country exclusively. On the other, the circumstances in which he was placed

and to which his creative activity readily accommodated itself, were not of a kind to enable him to enter in every important respect into the full current of national progress, or to reach one hand forward into the phase of national life which was to succeed that of his own days. He was neither a Bacon nor a Ralegh, yet he became more to his nation than either. The legacy which he left to that nation was not one of which it could immediately enter into full possession; nor were the generations which succeeded him truly conscious of the wealth bequeathed to them.

Shakspere as a national poet.

And yet, in these latter days at all events, who would deny that Shakspere has become the property of the nation, not less than of the world at large? How many an Englishman has in a more extended sense done what the Hungarian patriot is said to have done literally, and taught himself the English language out of Shakspere's pages! How many a student, excluded by circumstances from experience of the world, has sought and found in Shakspere a richer and more varied knowledge of human life and character than could have been gained by long years of familiarity with Court and Senate, with camp and market-place! How many an imagination, in danger of being dulled and emasculated by the influence of a conventional system of ethical and æsthetical rules, has with the aid of Shakspere ranged far beyond and soared far above them! Him at least a wholly exceptional feeling of national reverence has consecrated against proscription; his name is placed on no Index of prudery or prejudice; he at least is allowed to teach our youth what a glorious and manysided thing is life, and how the wings of the mind were not meant to be demurely folded, for the drill-sergeant of fashion to examine and approve. Those who have most experience of the ordinary literary studies of Englishmen know how to many of our countrymen Shakspere is, besides the Bible, the only poetic literature worthy of the name which they possess. This national service at all events he has rendered to us; and were another Somerset to burn our libraries, and another Long Parliament to pull down

our theatres, they could not destroy our poetic literature, because Shakspere at least has struck his roots into the people's hearts.

Uncertainty of the position of dramatic authors at the time of the beginning of Shakspere's career.

Yet this has been the work of centuries; it was the work of Shakspere's genius, not of a Shaksperean age. Before the Elisabethan period, there existed no higher secular literature which was, properly speaking, the possession of the nation. It was unacquainted with what it possessed, and therefore did not possess it. The leading poets were scholars and courtiers, trained on much Latin and a little Greek, or familiarised by travel or study with models of Italian literature. Chaucer and his successors were forgotten, though a ballad might here and there hand down traditions derived from an unknown source. Surrey and Wyatt and their successors, Sidney and even Spenser himself, with their sonnets and odes and allegories in prose and verse, had neither aimed at nor succeeded in popularising higher poetic literature. The chroniclers with leaden foot were only beginning to follow the chapmen and their dubious wares into the homes of the people. The stage had at last furnished a field for the growth of a literature which was of its nature essentially popular, while it admitted of the loftiest poetic aims. Men of talent, quite recently even men of genius, had begun to awake to so magnificent an opportunity. But the labours of playwright, actor, and manager were still hopelessly mixed up in appearance as well as in reality; and the excitement of the hour alone seemed the object of both authors and audiences. The drama had in the eyes of the age not yet made good its claim to be admitted into the domain of literature[1].

The choice before him.

When, therefore, Shakspere came up to London as a youth ambitious of trying his fortune, he had before him the choice of entering the old or the new sphere of literary

[1] Of this various illustrations have been already given; a significant one may be found in the fact, noted by Malone, that only 38 (or 39) original plays are extant which were printed in or before 1592. This does not exhaust, but probably approaches, the number of plays which either their authors deemed worthy of printing, or publishers thought likely to ensure success as printed works. See *Historical Account of the English Stage*, p. 6.

life. If he desired literary fame, in the circles which regarded themselves and were regarded by authors as its dispensers, he would have to seek it by compositions such as those which perhaps he brought with him to London, which at all events were early productions, and were more than equal in merit to most of what accepted poets had produced for the entertainment of lords and ladies and the satisfaction of academical critics. How far their patronage might bring bread as well as honour, was of course a different question. On the other hand there was the stage, supported as a pastime by a section of the same kind of patrons, or relying amidst dangers and difficulties upon its popularity among the lower orders. Here in return for hard toil, for a willingness and an aptitude to meet the tastes of very different classes of supporters, was the prospect of modest gain, and of a doubtful position; here was also the opportunity of displaying, after an inevitable period of apprenticeship, the full vigour of conscious genius. Shakspere, without wholly abandoning the intent to please by literary offerings of the other kind, chose the stage. The motives which determined the choice it is impossible to estimate; the result was that he at once and for ever associated his genius with the tendency which popularised and nationalised poetic literature.

He chooses the stage.

Result of this choice.

Opinion of Shakspere as a dramatist among his literary contemporaries:

The importance of the writer who had begun his labours among the rival playwrights gradually made itself felt among his contemporaries. It may be assumed that at first, anxious above all to make his way, anxious to be at work, he addressed himself to what lay nearest to his hand; and as a theatrical adapter taught himself the secrets of his craft. His success must have been rapid as well as unprecedented. How far the famous charge brought against him by a popular dramatist, that he was unscrupulous in seizing upon materials belonging to others, rested upon facts, it is simply impossible to determine[1].

Greene (1592).

[1] I refer of course to Greene's accusation, made in the *Groatsworth of Wit* (which, to whomsoever it was addressed, appeared after Greene's death in 1592): 'There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well



Chettle (1592).

A second dramatist who had been the means of giving the charge to the world, in the next year (1593) both offered a kind of apology for its publication, and paid a tribute to the 'facetious grace in writing' as well as to the moral probity of Shakspere, as reported to him on high authority[1].

able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in a country.' The bearing of this passage on the question of the authorship of certain plays will be briefly adverted to below: but it will be observed that, in urging three brother playwrights to abandon, like himself, the composition of plays, Greene says he knows of two others who had come to a similar determination. And it has been gathered from Nash's *Preface* to Greene's *Menaphon* in 1589, that even then 'a similar strike had been discussed among the playwrights,' while in the same year Lodge had 'vowed not again to sully his pen with plays.' See R. Simpson, *The School of Shakespeare*, *u.s.*, p. vi. The conclusion is that 'before 1592 Shakspere must have been prodigiously active, and that plays wholly or partly from his pen must have been in possession of many of the actors and companies.' From a letter in the *Academy* (April 4, 1874) it would appear that Mr. R. Simpson has come to the conclusion that 'in this passage Greene did not mean to accuse Shakspere of theft, but merely to reproach him, a mere actor, an uneducated peasant, with intruding among the authors, who ought to be educated men.' Mr. Simpson, however, himself shows that the metaphor is capable of application, and was applied, to plagiarism from, as well as to acting in, other men's plays. And, quite apart from the question of the quotation of the 'tiger's heart,' it would be necessary to suppose Shakspere's reputation and ambition as an *actor* to have been exceptionally great, in order to accept Mr. Simpson's conjecture. I have therefore not scrupled to adhere to the ordinary interpretation of Greene's words, which Mr. Simpson himself seems to have held a short time ago.

[1] See Chettle, *Kind Hart's Dreme*, p. iv (*Percy Soc. Publ.*, vol. v): 'The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish that I had . . . that I did not, I am sory, as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no less civill than he exclent in the qualitie he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.' That this 'other' was, as has been generally thought, Shakspere, and not, as Mr. Staunton appears to hold, Nash, has been I think clearly established by Mr. R. Simpson in another letter to the *Academy* (April 11, 1874). Mr. Simpson's argument may be strengthened in one point by observing that the term 'qualitie' is that constantly applied to the actor's profession *par excellence*. Hamlet (ii. 2) asks the players to give him 'a taste of their quality;' in Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (i. 3) Aretinus accuses 'the quality' of treason in the person of Paris the tragedian as 'the chief of his profession.' See Clark and Wright's note to their edition of *Hamlet*, p. 159; and cf. among numerous other examples, Thomas Heywood's address 'to my good Friends and Fellowes the Citty-Actors,' prefixed to his *Apology for Actors* (1612). Now, it is not known (as Mr. Simpson points out) that Nash was ever an actor. Nor is it necessarily to the purpose that he bestowed on Greene's pamphlet the epithets of 'scald, triviall, lying.'

It is manifest from this that Shakspere's appearance before the public as an original writer was speedily followed by an acknowledgment of his deserts on the part of competent judges. And to the same time as that in which he was exposed to the charge of appropriating the labours of other playwrights, belongs what it is difficult not to regard as a reference to him as an original dramatist in the well-known lines by the greatest non-dramatic poet of the age. In his *Teares of the Muses*—first published in 1591—Spenser makes Thalia refer to the degradation of the comic stage, and the 'death,' *i.e.*, as it would seem, the silence, of 'our pleasant Willy.' Soon afterwards the same poet wrote his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (not published till 1595), in which another allusion has been fairly thought recognisable to Shakspere[1]. That the patronage which he certainly received from young members of that group of ambitious spirits upon whom England's future seemed largely to depend, was due in part at least to the sympathy with which his genius inspired them, is surely no unreasonable conjecture. The testimony of a literary critic such as Meres (1598), catholic as he was in his powers of admiration, at all events shows that Shakspere might then already be freely proclaimed as 'the most excellent in both kinds' (tragedy and comedy) 'for the stage,' besides receiving a tribute for literary labours of other kinds. What is more significant still, his fellow-dramatists were not prevented by the influences either of literary envy or of professional jealousy from more or less warmly appreciating the pre-eminent merits of their rival or associate. We may not err in supposing the influence of his personality to have gone for much in this; we can only imagine to ourselves its charms; but there is

Spenser (1591 *circ.*).

Meres (1598).

[1] 'And there, though last not least, is Ætion,
A gentler shepheard may no where be found:
Whose Muse, full of high thoughts invention,
Doth like himselfe [i.e. his name] Heroically sound.'

I am not much struck by Mr. Minto's attempt (see *Academy*, Jan. 24th, 1874) to identify 'Ætion' with Drayton, whose assumed poetical name 'Rowlond' he thinks 'sounded in those days much more heroically than Shakespeare.'



a peculiar tenderness in the terms in which we occasionally find Shakspere mentioned by his brethren. Allowing, however, for this influence, which is of course to be distinguished from a critical estimate of literary merit, it is obvious that some among the contemporaries of Shakspere best qualified to judge were conscious of the true claims of his genius. Already in 1599, Weever had published in his *Epigrams*, said by Dyce to have been written earlier, some lines, of no intrinsic merit, containing a warm tribute to Shakspere's plays as well as to his narrative poems[1]. A passing tribute from a literary contemporary of note is that of Drayton in his *Matilda* (1594); but Shakspere is here only referred to (in the margin) as the author of *Lucrece*[2]. Chettle, in a tract composed on the death of Elisabeth[3], calls him the 'silver-tongued Melicert.' Webster, writing rather later (1612), is less generous in his praise, and brackets 'the right happy and copious industry' of Shakspere rather perfunctorily with that of 'Master Dekker and Master Heywood[4].' Some years earlier the academical wit who dealt out such telling strokes of criticism in the *Returne from Pernassus* (acted before the death of Elisabeth) let his audience know how 'Shakespeare puts down all' university dramatists[5]. In a collection of epigrams by T. Freeman, published under the title of *Rubbe and a great cast* in 1614, is stated to be one addressed to 'Master William Shakespeare.' A writer, under whose initials C. B.

Weever (1599).

Drayton (1594).

Chettle (1603). Webster (1612).

The Returne from Pernassus (1602 *circ.*).

Brooke (?) (1614).

[1] See the sonnet *Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare*, quoted by Dyce in *Life of Shakespeare*, p. lxv.

[2] Cf. Drake, *Shakspeare and his Times*, ii. 39.

[3] *England's Mourning Garment*, quoted by Collier, in *Introduction* to *Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, *u.s.*, p. 4. In a letter to the *Academy* (Jan. 10th, 1874) Mr. J. W. Hales has pointed out that the name *Melicert* was doubtless applied to Shakspere, as being supposed to be derived from *μέλι*. The name, as Mr. J. A. Symonds writes in the same journal (Jan. 24th), is mentioned by Suidas as having been given to Simonides *διὰ τὸ ἡδύ*. Mr. Symonds regards the *-κέρτης* as a pun for *-κρητος*, which is more likely than Mr. Hales' suggestion of *κηρός*. Chettle in this very passage, as well as other writers, apply the epithet 'honeyed' to Shakspere's style.—Similarly, as Mr. Hales points out, Spenser, when he referred (as seems probable) to Shakspere under the name Ætion, doubtless had in his mind the Greek *ἀετός*.

[4] See the address *To the Reader* prefixed to *Vittoria Corombona*.

[5] Act iv. sc. 3.

Mr. Dyce suspects Christopher Brooke, in 1614 pays an enthusiastic tribute to him,

> 'That from Helicon sends many a rill
> Whose nectared veines are drunk by thirstie men;
> Crown'd be his stile with fame, his head with bayes,
> And none detract but gratulate his praise[1].'

Thomas Heywood (1635).

Thomas Heywood's graceful tribute to the 'enchanting' and versatile art of 'mellifluous Shakespeare' has been already quoted[2]. It belongs to the year 1635. Four contemporaries—of whom, besides Ben Jonson, Leonard Digges is known to fame as an author (though not a dramatist)—contributed *Commendatory Verses* to the Folio published seven years after the poet's death. An elegy by a poet of the name of W. Basse had been written rather earlier. And, however commentators may interpret this or that passage in Ben Jonson, there can be no doubt that he, who had subjected himself to the most conscientious training undergone by any of the Elisabethan dramatists, was ready to acknowledge the less painfully achieved greatness of his friend[3]. The relations between Shakspere and the most noteworthy of the younger generation of dramatists—Fletcher—on the other hand are, at the most, matter of conjecture[4].

Jonson, Digges, and others (1623).

Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspere.

[1] In a poem called *The Ghost of Richard the Third*. See Dyce's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. cxii; cf. Collier's *Life*, p. ccxlvi.

[2] Ante, p. 257.

[3] The spirit in which Ben Jonson regarded Shakspere is a question affecting our estimate of the former rather than of the latter. In the present place it is sufficient to point to the proof of the appreciation of Shakspere by Jonson which (let perverse ingenuity seek at its will to detract from their intention) remains in the lines, upon the whole as just as they are beautiful, *To the Memory of my beloved Master William Shakspeare and what he hath left us*, contributed by Jonson, together with the verses *On the Portrait of Shakespeare*, to the First Folio, and reprinted in the *Underwoods*. Pope says—and it seems to me is perfectly justified in saying—that he 'cannot for his own part find anything *Invidious* or *Sparing* in these verses, but wonders Mr. Dryden was of that opinion.' (See *Preface* to Pope's edition of Shakspere.) Basse's elegy is alluded to in Ben Jonson's.

[4] That Lawrence Fletcher, the player with whom Shakspere was associated in the Lord Chamberlain's company, was an elder brother of the dramatist, is an untenable supposition. See Dyce's Introduction to his edition of the *Works* of Beaumont and Fletcher, p. xvii. As to Fletcher's supposed co-operation with Shakspere, and Beaumont and Fletcher's frequent quotations from him, see below.

Limits of Court 'patronage' received by him.

If the favour which Shakspere found during or immediately after the close of his life was to some extent exceptional, and in some degree at least due to a real insight on the part of his contemporaries into the greatness of his genius, it should at the same time not be sought to exaggerate the nature of this popularity. *A priori* of course it is easy to construct a very pleasing hypothesis of a great Queen and her successor setting the example to Court and nation of holding in honour the greatest of living poets. But there is no proof that any personal patronage was extended to Shakspere by either Elisabeth or James. Indeed of the all but inevitable correlative of personal patronage there are singularly few and faint signs in his plays. We may grant the usual interpretation of a famous passage in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* as implying a compliment on the part of the still youthful poet to the Vestal on the throne; Portia's review of her suitors may amount to an allusive tribute to the much-wooed princess; the only direct apostrophe to Elisabeth is to be found in the well-known lines in *Henry VIII*, most assuredly composed after the Queen's death. Doubtless King James appreciated his share of the incense in the latter drama (I see no reason for supposing it to have been offered not by Shakspere, but by Ben Jonson); and was gratified by the dynastic comfort derivable from *Macbeth*. But because Shakspere thus sparsely gratified a taste common to two sovereigns, it by no means follows that he was in any sense 'patronised' by either of them. In the apocryphal letter ascribed to Southampton it is indeed stated that several of Shakspere's plays were 'most singulerly liked of' Queen Elisabeth when performed before her at Court; and it is probable, though not proved, that King James too was a spectator of various of the poet's works. But of any special or personal marks of goodwill there is no proof, unless a robust credulity still clings to the tradition that Elisabeth testified her desire to see the truly comic character of Falstaff degraded into the central figure of a farce, or to the equally apocryphal anecdote that James I expressed his thanks

for *Macbeth* in an autograph letter[1]. I dimly recall the memory of a modern Italian play,—and not a feeble or unskilful play either,—in which Queen Elisabeth is represented as receiving a petition from Shakspere at the hands of Cecil, and graciously assenting to the prayer of her faithful poet. Other imaginative minds may have invented all sorts of relations between the Queen and the poet as biographical possibilities; and the notion may possibly linger in some fond fancies that Shakspere was 'one of the brightest ornaments of Elisabeth's court.' All such ideas, if they are allowed to come forth beyond the limits of avowed fiction, are to be rejected as worse than baseless; and even as fictions they are likely to prove dangerous.

His noble patrons.

The kind of patronage which Shakspere received from certain members of the nobility is more open to speculation.

[1] See in reference to this Malone's *Inquiry*, p. 95, in which he demolishes the possibility of such a letter as that from Queen Elisabeth to Shakspere, which had been forged by the ingenious Mr. Ireland. Malone incidentally points out that Puttenham, whose *Arte of Poesie* appeared in 1589, and who was one of the Gentlemen Pensioners, and therefore constantly near the Queen's person, seems never to have heard of Shakspere, although he discusses dramatic poets. —The generalities in Ben Jonson's lines ('those flights upon the banks of Thames, That so did take Eliza and our James'), and Chettle's complaint that Shakspere had failed to write an elegy on 'her death that graced his desert, And to his laies opend her royall eare,' appear to me to prove nothing. However, an eminent authority thinks otherwise. See Halliwell's *Life of Shakespeare*, pp. 151–3. A ballad called *A Mournful Dittie, entituled Elizabeth's Losse, together with a Welcome for King James* (1603, printed in Collier's *Life of Shakespeare*), contains the following stanza:

'You Poets all, brave Shakspere,
Johnson, Greene,
Bestow your time to write
For England's Queene;
Lament, lament,' &c.

The Greene here mentioned is I suppose Thomas Greene, author of *A Poet's Vision and a Prince's Glorie* (1603).—Reasons will be given below against the supposition that Shakspere was in any way distinguished among his fellow-actors, the King's actors, by James. If he had been a courtly poet, he would probably have depicted with less distinct touches the habits of drinking of the Danish Court, which so much endeared the Danish King to James on the visit of the former to his brother-sovereign. Tieck's supposition that in *Timon of Athens* (iv. 3) Shakspere directly flattered James in the passage where the hero proclaims but one honest man—'and he is a *steward*' (pronounce Stewart)—strikes me as only less absurd than Ulrici's laborious apology (*Shakspeare's Dramatic Art*, p. 245) for the 'extravagant flattery' in question.

His relation to Southampton (though the extent of Southampton's early munificence has doubtless been exaggerated) was so enduring (though its supposed manifestation after the close of his career as an actor is to be rejected), that it cannot be ascribed to mere satisfaction on the part of the Earl in the dedications of two youthful poems. And if the theory explanatory of the significance of Shakspere's *Sonnets* which has most probability in its favour be correct, the Earl of Pembroke too must have approached intimacy with the poet[1]. Among the later plays of Shakspere one is distinctly to be brought into connexion with speculations in foreign discovery in which both Southampton and Pembroke were interested[2]; and the conspiracy in which they were to some degree involved undoubtedly occupied the mind of the author of *Henry VIII*[3]. The Earl of Montgomery too, Pembroke's brother, seems to have admired and 'favoured' the poet[4]. But after this has been said, it remains to observe to how little it amounts. Among those whose patronage Shakspere sought and found in his early days were some whose goodwill probably remained to him, and was prized by him, to the close of his theatrical career.

No evidence of his having been appreciated by Ralegh or Bacon.

But of any appreciation of Shakspere by the master-minds of his age, except where, as in Ben Jonson's case, they were fellow-workers in the same field, we have no evidence. Spenser's sympathy seems indeed to have been awakened by some of Shakspere's earlier efforts; but the notice or notices are at best of a passing character. We can hardly suppose Ralegh to have been unacquainted with Shakspere; and Bacon can have hardly passed him by without notice[5]. But what evidence have we that the most

[1] I will not dwell upon the possibility that *Much Ado about Nothing* may have some reference to the difficulty of inducing the same young nobleman to 'marry and settle.'

[2] Vide infra as to the subject of *The Tempest*.

[3] That it is adverted to in *Richard II* (*i. e.* in the passage added to the third or omitted from the first two editions of that play, iv. 1) is more than doubtful.

[4] The First Folio was dedicated to both.

[5] The evidence of a few parallel passages in the *Essays* and in Shakspere's plays is too slender to be worth examining, while it is of course worth nothing

far-seeing politician and the most comprehensive thinker among the Elisabethans were aware of what it was to have, or to have had, a Shakspere by their side?

Extent of his general popularity as a dramatist.

Lastly, there was the 'general public,' or rather that large section of the public which affected entertainments such as those provided by the genius of Shakspere. That his plays were pre-eminently popular, there is no reason to doubt. It is proved by the early jealousy of his fellow-dramatists, and the willing testimony of the contemporaries of his maturity. It is supported by the fact that he wrote so much, though others (Thomas Heywood, *e.g.*) wrote more; and by the certainty that he realised from his theatre a comfortable income, sufficient to enable him to retire in fair case before old age had crippled his powers[1]. Lastly, it is borne out by the fact that when the stage was under a cloud, Shakspere was among those remembered while others were forgotten, and that when its life recommenced, his plays were among the first to recover possession of their ancient domain.

Number of his plays printed during his lifetime.

But to what extent was this popularity within the walls of the playhouse reflected outside them? Of his thirty-seven plays[2], just half, or eighteen, were, so far as we know, printed in their author's lifetime; and the average of impressions extant from this period is between two and three[3]. This will not of course exhaust the number of quartos of Shakspere's plays printed during his lifetime; but considering the facility of surreptitious printing, and

to point to the probability (from a passage in *Troilus and Cressida*) that Shakspere had read, or looked into, the *Advancement of Learning*.—It may be noted that Drummond was 'one of Shakespeare's earliest admirers in Scotland, and had his well-fingered copies of Shakespeare's Poems and three of his Plays on his book-shelves.' See Masson's *Life of Drummond*, p. 104.

[1] Hence the amiable insinuation of Pope, that Shakspere

'For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.'

[2] Counting them, *i.e.*, as in the list given below, and reckoning each Part as a play in the case of *Henry VI* and *Henry IV*.

[3] See the *List of the Early Editions of Shakspeare* in Malone's *Shakspeare* (by Boswell, 1821, the edition quoted throughout this chapter), vol. ii. p. 647 *seqq.*; and cf. Steevens' observations, *ib.* p. 643 *seqq.* Mr. Fleay has quite recently drawn up a most useful Table of the quarto editions of Shakspere's works for the new Shakspere Society.

the probability that no moral blame was held to attach to any such proceeding, the calculation may assist in an enquiry as to the demand which among readers existed for Shakspere's plays. It may go for what it is worth, that of the so-called 'doubtful plays,' *i.e.* of plays which have been at any time ascribed to Shakspere, eleven are known to have been printed in his lifetime[1]. Of course reasons have been suggested for the smallness of the number of the plays of Shakspere which appeared in print during his life; but whatever those reasons were, the slightness of the demand on the part of the public must have been among the number. Collective editions of the plays of Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher were printed in the lifetime of their authors[2]. On the other hand, Shakspere's works were not *collected* till seven years after his death (in the First Folio, 1623); and though the editors of this collection speak of 'diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors,' yet their own tone strikes one as the reverse of that of extreme confidence in a brisk sale of their folio, which was probably printed in a very limited number of copies[3].

The First Folio (1623).

Thus the evidence which we possess on the subject tends to show that the reputation enjoyed by Shakspere in his lifetime was limited to a more or less genial recognition of his merits on the part of a few patrons and on the part of some of his literary contemporaries,—chiefly fellow-dramatists,—and to what may be termed a general preference for his plays, as compared with those of other writers, on the part of the classes forming the theatrical public. But

Reasons for this limited reputation.

[1] See the list in Malone's *Shakspeare*, ii. 681–2.

[2] W. Blades, *Shakspere and Typography*, p. 35. This pamphlet, which is of course in part intended as a *jeu d'esprit*, suggests that Shakspere was at one time of his life a printer, and that it may accordingly be plausibly supposed that 'sickened with reading other people's proofs for a livelihood, he shrunk from the same task on his own behalf.'

[3] According to Steevens' conjecture (Malone's *Shakspeare*, ii. 658, *note*) in not more than 250. The best proof of the smallness of the issue lies in the extreme rarity of the First Folio, not known to exist in more than thirty copies, one of which was recently sold for the sum of £700. According to Halliwell (*Shakesperiana*, p. 43) one copy is in existence bearing the date of 1622.

Puritanism in Shakspere's later years, and after his death.

though the theatrical public must have largely increased in London during the earlier half of his career[1], the attacks upon the stage towards the close of the century recommenced[2], and the spirit which prompted them had indeed never slept. The classes moved by this spirit were those upon whom more than upon any other the future of England depended, and to whose tastes and feelings the growth of a popular literature must always in the main accommodate itself. The middle classes of the nation were becoming more and more unfavourable to the stage, unfavourable therefore to dramatic literature, and in consequence to the growth of a full appreciation of the merits of the greatest national dramatist. The spirit of Puritanism was gradually developing into something of a far deeper significance than a mere view of Church government, or a theory of the relations between the system of the State and the forms of religious life. It was arriving at a consistent consciousness of its full significance. To be a Puritan meant to seek to regulate the whole of life, in all its aspects, in its outer and inner relations, according to fixed laws. It is this certainty, this absence of all shrinking back or wavering to the right or to the left, which gave to Puritanism, in peace and in war, its for a time irresistible force. It is this also which gave to Puritanism what we call (and rightly call) its narrowness; whether the term be one of praise or of blame, depends upon the correctness or incorrectness of the Puritan conception of life. To this spirit nothing could be a greater abomination than the theatre, the very conditions of whose existence conflict with it; and nothing connected with the theatre could be so great an abomination as the boundlessness with which the genius of its writers, and of Shakspere above all, had endowed the drama. Against the

[1] In 1592, Nash (in his *Pierce Pennilesse*) spoke of a play as being witnessed by 'ten thousand spectators at least, at several times.' Altogether, it may be assumed that the number of visitors to the theatres increased rapidly till near the close of the century. Cf. *Introd.* to Gosson's *School of Abuse*, p. x.

[2] Cf. Collier, i. 308, 311. In 1599 was published Dr. Rainolds' *Overthrow of Stage-playes*. In the same year King James interfered to protect the English players at Edinburgh, the Session of the Kirk of Scotland having prohibited the faithful from resorting unto their performances 'under pain of the church censures.' Collier, i. 345.

theatre, therefore, Puritanism (as has been seen and will be further shown below) directed its assaults with increasing vigour; and finally the seizure of power by Puritanism, in the days of the opening of the Civil War in 1642, was inevitably accompanied by the closing of all the playhouses.

His reputation as a dramatist in the times of Charles I.

Under these influences the fame of Shakspere suffered, and must have suffered, even had the times arrived at a distinction between dramatic literature and the literature of the stage. It is true that to the friends of the stage, and even to dramatic writers, Shakspere, in the times of Charles I, was far from being the acknowledged chief of our dramatic literature. Apart from the fact that the temporary reaction in favour of the stage, produced in a wider sphere than that of the habitual supporters of the drama by the attack of Prynne upon the Queen as a patron of it, necessarily operated to the advantage of living writers who could supply the new demand suddenly created[1], the generation which succeeded Shakspere's was (as is almost invariably the case) not that which was most alive to his claims to pre-eminence. Ben Jonson, indeed, though the acknowledged chief of living dramatic authors, at no time succeeded in inducing, as he at no time attempted to induce, a belief that he outshone the friend whom he so long survived. But the great dramatists who excited the greatest literary enthusiasm in this age (for of the mere passing popularity of the hour it is unnecessary to speak) seem to have been those who in the bent of their genius, as well as in the form of their productions, stood nearest to it. The fame of Beaumont and Fletcher

[1] Cf. Masson's *Life of Milton*, i. 407–8. Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* was published in 1632. I shall return to these occurrences below; in the above I am merely attempting to survey the progress, together with its back waves, of Shakspere's fame. In connexion with the favour which he enjoyed among literary men in this period, it may be remarked as strange that no mention of him should be found in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). It might have been thought that a place would have been given to the reading of plays of Shakspere as a remedy against melancholy, partaking neither of the dangers of 'overmuch study' of the learned works, or of the reading 'nothing but Playbooks, idle Poems, and Jests,' such as those mentioned in Part II. Sect. 2. Memb. 4 of this immortal treatise.

at least rivalled that of Shakspere[1]. Thirty-six of the plays of the former authors were published in a collected form in 1647 (they were republished with seventeen others in 1679); of Shakspere's, the First Folio collection, with a reprint in 1632 (the Second Folio), sufficed till after the Restoration. When in 1663 the Third Folio was published, it contained seven additional plays, all of which (with the exception of *Pericles*) are now usually considered spurious. The Fourth Folio (in 1685) was again a mere reprint of the Third.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Folios (1632, 1663, 1685).

It is hardly too much to conclude from the above data, that by the time of the Restoration Shakspere's popular fame had been reduced to a mere tradition. That his memory was not for a time at least extinguished, together with that of the Elisabethan age to which he had belonged, as the memory of Chaucer seemed to have been all but extinguished by the Wars of the Roses, was in the first instance due to the stage. When the Restoration took place, the theatres were reopened; and the theatres

His fame after the Restoration revived with the reopening of the theatres.

[1] In his essay *On Plays and Puritans*, Mr. Kingsley has quoted Cartwright's lines which exemplify the above statement. Cartwright (whose own most successful dramatic effort is an obvious imitation of Ben Jonson) places Fletcher's name "'twixt Jonson's grave and Shakspeare's lighter sound,' and tells Fletcher that

> 'Shakspeare to thee was dull, whose best wit lies
> I' th' ladies questions, and the fool's replies.
> . . . . . .
> Whose wit our nice times would obsceneness call—
> . . . . . .
> Nature was all his art; thy vein was free
> As his, but without his scurrility'—

a criticism which is nothing short of ludicrous from the author of *The Ordinary*. Beaumont and Fletcher—or Fletcher and some other dramatist—make complimentary reference to two of Shakspere's Roman plays in the Prologue to *The False One*. Gifford, in his *Memoirs of Ben Jonson*, quotes from a tract by J. Cooke on Charles I's Trial (1649) the charge, 'Had King Charles but studied Scripture half so much as he studied Ben Jonson or Shakspeare,' &c. To the anecdote that Charles I said that Shirley's *Gamester* (of which he himself was believed to have suggested the plot) was 'the best play he had seen for seven years,' I attach no importance. I cannot help thinking that injustice has frequently been done to the literary and artistic intelligence of King Charles I. Ranke has in this, as in other instances, shown a greater spirit o fairness towards Charles than many English writers. See *Englische Geschichte* (unhappily still untranslated), vol. ii. pp. 224 *seqq*.

could not be reopened without the recognition of Shakspere being to some extent revived. But the work done by the Puritan Revolution was not undone at once; and, insofar as Shakspere was involved in the general proscription of the drama, has perhaps never been undone completely.

Shakspere and the Restoration stage.

It will be shown in its place, how, whatever may be thought of the stage of the reign of Charles I, that of the reigns of the last two Stuart kings was under the dominant influence of the world of Court and fashion. The masses were not again, as in the days of Elisabeth, vehemently and irresistibly attracted towards the theatre; and the respectable middle-classes could only be tempted in the same direction at the peril of something even more important than their respectability. Its entertainments were now under the influence of tastes to a great extent frivolous and to a great extent foreign. Far more certainly than D'Avenant could claim the paternity of Shakspere, the stage for which he and his contemporaries catered was the bastard of the Elisabethan theatre and of its unholy union with a foreign drama, except in its Comedy of Manners, in which it faithfully mirrored its own age. Yet to this stage of the Restoration we owe the new beginnings of a recognition of the genius of Shakspere. Of seventy-three plays in which its greatest actor, Betterton, is stated to have performed, about the same number were by Shakspere as by Fletcher. It would indeed seem that Shakspere's plays were chiefly chosen for performance on account of the strong characters which they contained and of the striking situations which they furnished,—in other words, because of their lending themselves with so incomparable an ease to histrionic and scenic effect. Nor was any reverence shown by D'Avenant or Dryden in the pitiless process to which they subjected several of Shakspere's plays; but (apart from Dryden's literary appreciation of Shakspere, to be adverted to immediately) they nevertheless even in this way rendered a service to his fame. More and more his genius made itself manifest in its most natural sphere, even through the veil of versions which were

Stage treatment of Shakspere in the Restoration and Augustan periods.

perversions, and of adaptations which were a compound of mutilations and Procrustean extensions[1]. On the stage this method of treating Shakspere continued long after the theatre had ceased to be the sole means of keeping alive his fame, and after he had once more been enabled, if I may use the expression, to speak for himself. A few names of these adaptations will suffice. The *Jew of Venice* made his appearance on the stage at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1701, in a version of Shakspere's play (which was printed) by George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne. 'Granville the Polite' left out the characters of Launcelot and Old Gobbo, and introduced a 'Masque of Peleus and Thetis,' during which Shylock, supping at a separate table, drinks a toast to his lady-love Money[2]. *Measure for Measure*, on which D'Avenant had already tried his hand,

[1] *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado about Nothing* were amalgamated by D'Avenant into a single tragi-comedy called *The Law against Lovers*. It was he who conceived the idea, which he left to Dryden to execute, of increasing the effectiveness of *The Tempest* (or *The Enchanted Island*, for the title too was double-necked) by a process of reduplication which no words can characterise. To the maiden who had never beheld a man now corresponded a youth who had never set eyes on a woman. Ariel too was provided with a female double (Milcha), and Caliban likewise (Sycorax); and Miranda received a younger sister Dorinda, the object of which character was to furnish an oblique counterpart of Miranda, though I think that the scope of Dryden's intention has been unnecessarily exaggerated. The play will be found in Scott's Dryden, vol. iii. It appears to have been acted in 1667, and was published in 1670. Dryden's *All for Love, or the World well Lost* (1678) is rather based on *Anthony and Cleopatra* than, properly speaking, an adaptation of it. (It is printed in Scott's Dryden, vol. v.) In *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* (1678), on the other hand, Dryden undertook to 'correct' what he opined 'was, in all Probability, one of' Shakspere's 'first Endeavours on the Stage;' which, according to his own statement, he effected by 'new-modelling the plot, throwing out many unnecessary Persons; improving those characters which were begun and left unfinished, as Hector, Troilus, Pandarus, and Thersites, and adding that of Andromache.' See *Preface* in Dryden's *Works* (Scott's edition, vol. vi. p. 240); and cf. on the whole subject of these productions of Dryden's, the essay by Delius, *Dryden and Shakespeare*, in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, vol. iv. (1869).

[2] As to Granville's play, cf. (Geneste's) *History of the Drama and Stage in England*, vol. ii. p. 243 *seqq*. In the Prologue the Ghost of Shakspere is made to say:

> 'The first rude sketches Shakspeare's pencil drew;
> But all the shining master-strokes are new.
> This play ye Critics shall your fury stand,
> Adorn'd and rescu'd by a faultless hand.'

was again recast by Gildon, and produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1700—'written originally by Shakspere, and now very much alter'd, with the second title of *Beauty the Best Advocate*. D'Urfey—of doubtful memory—in 1682 brought *Cymbeline* on the stage of Drury Lane under the promising appellations of *The Injured Princess, or the Fatal Wager*. *The Merry Wives* may perhaps be recognised under the new title of *The Comical Gallant, or the Amours of Sir John Falstaff*, an effort of the critical mind of John Dennis (1702), who likewise re-named *Coriolanus* as *The Invader of his Country, or the Fatal Resentment* (1720). But what would Shakspere and the second of his royal 'patrons' have said to the new title of *The Taming of the Shrew*, of *Sauny the Scot*, by John Lacy (1698), who turned Grumio into a Scotchman, and the verse of Shakspere into prose of his own[1]? No species of Shakspere's plays was sacred from these alterations; histories, tragedies, and comedies were alike exposed to them; by no means only the necessities of the stage, but also the exigencies of a supposed superior literary taste dictated them. If Cibber altered *Richard III* (1700) with so much theatrical tact, that his version keeps its place on the stage to this day[2], the Duke of Buckinghamshire, an authority on the whole art of poetry, expanded *Julius Caesar* into two tragedies, for one of which (*Brutus*) Pope wrote a couple of choruses. Among the few plays which escaped, until Garrick himself essayed the task, was *Hamlet;* a fact probably owing to the stage traditions attaching to the performance of the chief character by the great hero of the stage after the Restoration,—Betterton[3].

[1] Geneste, i. 139.

[2] See Geneste, ii. 195 *seqq*. He introduced many lines from other Shaksperean plays, and some, as the famous

'Off with his head,—so much for Buckingham!'

out of his own head, or, as Geneste rather uncharitably suggests, 'perhaps from some obscure play with a slight alteration.'

[3] Garrick's alteration of *Hamlet* (1772) was never printed. It is described by Geneste, v. 343. The original was restored in 1780, after which date Garrick's alteration was no more heard of. A *List of Plays* altered from Shakspere is given in Malone's edition (by Boswell), vol. ii. pp. 683 *seqq*. In view of these experi-

So much as to the treatment of Shakspere on and by the stage, from which he suffers to this day. For, as already said, the necessity of accommodating dramatic works to the condition of the stage, which necessarily alter, is a very different motive from that of heightening immediate effect and producing immediate excitement by a wanton disloyalty to the intentions of an author. The proceedings of D'Avenant and Dryden were in part influenced by misunderstood or hastily-adopted theories of the dramatic art; but they were more essentially due to the frivolous spirit of the Restoration age, which sought in the drama a mere stimulant of passion and satisfaction of curiosity, and had scant reverence for the great master whose works it made to serve such purposes[1].

Opinion on Shakspere in the Restoration

But I have said that the tendency of this period was foreign as well as frivolous. Applied to literature, and to dramatic literature in particular, this signifies that the

ments upon Shakspere it is at times difficult to avoid accepting Pope's sneer (see *Preface* to his edition) that 'Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as Taylors are of what is *graceful*;' though players might retort, that literary men have in this case sinned as emphatically as stage-managers.

[1] A fair example of the spirit in which the society of the Restoration age regarded Shakspere may perhaps be found in Pepys, who certainly had his wits about him, and who moreover confesses (*Diary*, December 10, 1663) that his 'nature was most earnest in books of pleasure, as plays;' among which he mentions Shakspere's. He notes the performance of several Shaksperean plays witnessed by him; of most he approves, to others he takes exception. Thus he thought *Macbeth* 'a pretty good play' (November 5, 1664); and again, 'a most excellent play for variety' (December 28, 1666); and again (here his criticism is more elaborate than usual), 'a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertissement, though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here, and suitable' (January 7, 1667). With *Hamlet* he was 'mightily pleased' (August 31, 1668). On the other hand, he considered *Midsummer Night's Dream* 'the most insipid ridiculous play that ever he saw in his life' (September 25, 1662); and the *Merry Wives* 'did not please him at all, no part of it' (August 15, 1667). *Othello* he had 'ever heretofore' esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read *The Adventures of Five Houres*, 'it seems a mean thing' (August 10, 1666). This was the result, moreover, not of seeing but reading *Othello*. I may add that, as Mr. Toller has pointed out to me, in Pepys' *Diary* (August 29, 1666) Sir W. Coventry is mentioned as humorously quoting Falstaff,—certainly an indication that Shakspere was familiar in some mouths.—In the *Diary* of Evelyn, a man of literary training and tastes, there seems to be no mention of Shakspere, though a portrait of him is once mentioned in Evelyn's *Correspondence*.

writers and readers of the Restoration period turned with predilection to foreign models, and borrowed from foreign schools their rules of art. The French drama being by this time near the summit of its greatness, it was made the model of English tragic dramatists, and, though not in the same degree, of comic likewise; and the rules of dramatic art fathered by the French upon the ancients became the rules of English literary criticism of the drama. Shakspere had neglected these rules; he was therefore a barbarian.

and post-Restoration period.

Now, it is necessary to distinguish in this period of opinion on Shakspere between those who were merely imperfectly awake to the variety of forms which art (being like nature infinite in the number of its developements) may assume, and those who, like pert schoolboys, repeated their masters' lesson as the Alpha and Omega of critical wisdom. To the former class Milton, the greatest poet whom England had produced since Shakspere himself, belonged. In his early days he had spoken of the modern stage in terms of very limited sympathy. 'Gorgeous Tragedy' to him found its most adequate representatives in the ancient Greek drama; 'of later age' 'the buskin'd stage' had only *rarely* been ennobled by creations of similar worth[1]. And though among the poets of the 'well-trod' stage (another half-contemptuous epithet) he was able to recognise genius in Jonson as well as in Shakspere, yet it is well known in what terms he speaks of the latter:

Milton (1630–71).

> 'Sweetest Shakspere, Fancy's child,
> Warbled his native wood-notes wild'—

in other words, Shakspere was an irresistible, but irregular singer[2]. The *Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakspeare* (1630) is even earlier in date than *L'Allegro;* its enthusiasm is indisputable; but there is the germ of the same distinction in the contrast drawn (though to the advantage of the second) between 'slow-endeavouring art' and Shakspere's 'easy numbers.' In his old age, Milton

[1] See *Il Penseroso.*

[2] See *L'Allegro.*

would hear of no models of tragedy but the ancients and Italians[1].

Dryden (1667 seqq.).

Dryden, as was all but inevitable in a great writer who bent his genius to the demands of a little age, holds a kind of middle position. As of his own works it has been truly said that the style which he introduced into English tragedy was very little in consonance with his own natural genius[2], so in his criticism of Shakspere he dwelt not only on defects which are defects in themselves, but on others which are such only under the application of arbitrary canons. The different attitudes successively assumed by Dryden in dramatic criticism will be more appropriately noticed elsewhere; here it will suffice to note how of his critical essays that *On the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy* (which accompanied his version of *Troilus and Cressida*, 1679) shows, in spite of the practical results at which Dryden arrived in his treatment of Shakspere, a far truer appreciation of Shakspere's greatness than the earlier essays *Of Dramatic Poesy* (1667–8) and *Of Heroic Plays* (1672).

Rymer (1693).

The nadir of Shakspere-criticism in this or any age was reached by Thomas Rymer, the author of the *Short View of Tragedy* (1693). A historical student cannot forget the debt due to the author of the *Foedera;* but even bearing in mind this achievement in a totally different field, it is difficult to read with patience the oracular diatribe of the historiographer-royal, who had began his literary career as a tragic poet[3]. At the same time, I cannot consent to rate Rymer even as a critic so miserably low as it has long been the fashion to rate him. Dr. Johnson[4] declares that it is more eligible to go wrong with Dryden, 'whose criticism has the majesty of a Queen,' than right with Rymer, 'whose criticism has the ferocity of a Tyrant;' and

[1] See the Preface to *Samson Agonistes*.

[2] Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des* 18. *Jahrh.*, i. 94.

[3] He was author of a tragedy called *Edgar*, which was intended to 'extol monarchical principles.' Addison makes fun of it in the *Spectator* (No. 605), and after him Sir Walter Scott is said to have described it as a proof of the fact 'that a drama may be extremely regular and at the same time intolerably dull.'

[4] See his Life of Dryden, in *Lives of the Poets*.

Macaulay[1], who on occasion displays a gift for exaggerating even exaggeration itself, speaks of him simply as 'the worst critic that ever lived.' Rymer was both an accomplished scholar and a shrewd observer; and his remarks as applied to the tragedy of his own day are neither without sense nor without point. But he was hopelessly crippled by his abject reverence for the 'Aristotelian' rules; and of the supreme ends of tragic poetry he had no conception, or he would not, to mention only a single instance, have spoken of the story of *Othello* as 'a senseless, trifling tale.'

Jeremy Collier (1697-8).

The object of Jeremy Collier's *Short View* (1697–8) was so essentially an attack upon the existing condition of the stage, that his remarks on Shakspere and the Elisabethan drama in general are not only of their kind incidental, but to be judged as illustrations consciously sought from the author's special point of view. Yet Collier shows a genuine appreciation of the merits of the Elisabethan drama, observing with great truth that its tendency was moral, and that Shakspere when he misbehaves gains nothing by his misbehaviour. In the remarks on the character of Falstaff in Collier's third chapter there is considerable good sense;—superficial as they are, I cannot help noting them, when remembering how absurdly a certain school of 'Falstaff-interpretation' has sought to confound the obvious moral teaching which the character, with all its transitory attractiveness, is undoubtedly intended to convey[2].

Progress of Shakspere's popularity.

While, then, the stage was after its kind, and divers of the critical authorities were after their kind, using or abusing Shakspere, his deserts were at all events on the sure road to a fuller and truer appreciation; for he was being acted, and he was being read. The latter process, however, underlay considerable difficulty, so long as no

[1] *Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson.* Pope, according to Spence, pronounced Rymer 'one of the best critics we ever had.' Scott's *Dryden*, xv. 384. But then Rymer was opposed to Dennis (and Gildon).

[2] This 'mistaken refining' is encouraged by actors who are anxious to emphasise the very ambiguous fact that Falstaff is 'after all a gentleman.' The gross knight is not to be thus 'purged.'

Early editions of Shakspere:

editions of his works existed except the old folios and the scattered quartos. At last the growing demand produced a gradually increasing supply.

Rowe's (1709).

The first octavo edition of Shakspere was that of Rowe, published in the year 1709[1]. Nicholas Rowe was poet-laureate, and proposed to produce his edition under the 'shelter' of the highest academical patronage. Himself a dramatist of more than ordinary merit—of course of the French school—he was able to supply such details as dramaturgic experience could alone with certainty furnish; nor should it be forgotten that he was the first to endeavour to construct a life of Shakspere, and thus to reveal the fact of the extreme paucity of trustworthy materials at hand for such an attempt.

Shakspere's literary fame established in the 'Augustan' age.

We are now in the reign of Queen Anne, in the so-called Augustan age of English literature. It was the age in which the policy of William III had at last borne its fruits, gathered by the agency of the great general and statesman to whom he had bequeathed his political inheritance; the age too in which England stood, more decidedly than at any other time in her history, in the van among the states of Europe, as the representative of progress in almost every field of intellectual life. In those days, if our literary men at times aspired to be statesmen, our statesmen desired with at least equal ardour to be accounted literary men, or at all events the understanding friends and patrons of literature. In this period may be said to have taken place the establishment of Shakspere's literary fame.

Pope's edition (1725).

A large number of editions in succession attests the growing recognition of his pre-eminent importance. Of these the first after that of Rowe was Pope's. He had achieved glory and a competence by his translation of Homer; and the booksellers were sure that Mr. Pope would be able to give to the public that perfect edition of Shakspere for which the time had obviously arrived.

[1] I have taken the data as to editions from the Preface to the *Cambridge Shakespeare*, and F. Thimm's *Shakspeariana from* 1564 *to* 1864 (Second Edition, 1872). See also Halliwell's *Shakesperiana* (1841).

The work, the result of a labour neither single-minded nor single-handed[1], made its appearance in 1725, in six quarto volumes. As has been well remarked[2], a passage in the Preface to this edition contains a very fair description of what the editor did *not* do in it. For Pope there observes that 'he has discharg'd the dull duty of an editor, to his best judgment, with more labour than he expects thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to his private sense and conjecture.' The keynote to Pope's spirit as an editor is that quality which is termed by a very good English word (which has the authority of both Shakspere and Pope himself), the *cock-sure*. His canons of spelling *e.g.* are so certain and precise that he corrects Shakspere's loose orthography with the determined ease with which a schoolmaster corrects a schoolboy's blunders in an exercise on Latin suffixes; while his confidence in his own power of conjecture is so absolute that he introduces his own emendations into the text with reckless freedom. At the same time Pope's ingenuity and quickness of mind were so great, that his emendations are frequently surprisingly able, and often undoubtedly amount to an obvious restoration of the true text. Had Pope but been trained a scholar, instead of having very imperfectly trained himself to what slight scholarship he ever possessed, his name might have stood at no immensurable distance from that of the very Bentley whose 'desperate hook' he ridiculed. As it was, his wit was employed upon satirising the 'verbal criticism' of the 'awful Aristarch,' who might himself have done great service to the text of Shakspere, without incurring the just censure drawn down upon him by such a hypothesis as suggested his ruthless 'improvements' of Milton.

Upon Pope's Shakspere (which had passed with considerable rapidity through three editions, and afterwards

[1] Pope was assisted in it by Fenton, who received '30*l.* 14*s.* for his share in Pope's meagre edition of Shakspere. Very little labour was bestowed upon the work, and much of that little was done by Fenton and Gay.' Elwin's *Pope*, vol. viii. p. 82, *note*.

[2] Preface to *Cambridge Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. xxix.

Theobald's (1733).

reached a fourth) followed that of Theobald, in 1733. Lewis Theobald had six years previously incurred the wrath of Pope by a too free criticism of the demerits of his edition of Shakspere in a pamphlet devoted to the subject[1]; and Pope's revenge had been to constitute his critic the original hero of the *Dunciad*. Theobald had some knowledge of the ancient as well as the modern drama, and some experience of the style[2]; and his attention was in particular given to Shakspere, on passages of whose works he was in the habit of contributing notes to a weekly paper called *Mist's Journal*,—'crucifying Shakspere once a week,' according to a line omitted from the later editions of the *Dunciad*. Theobald's reputation as an editor of Shakspere has, however, survived that of his angry predecessor, and justly so. He was, which Pope was not, conscientious; he did his work, which Pope did not, with care; unlike Pope (who used Rowe, and perhaps occasionally referred to the First Folio and some of the quartos), he based it upon a diligent collation of the existing prints; and he added many emendations of his own of real ingenuity and acknowledged merit. And signal praise was afterwards bestowed upon him by Warton, who calls Theobald the first publisher of Shakspere who hit upon the rational method of correcting his author by reading such books as the author himself had read[3].

Hanmer's (1744).

After these ensued a series of editions, which it is unnecessary to seek to characterise individually, in particular as some of them are no longer in ordinary use. These were Hanmer's, published (1744) at the Oxford University

[1] *Shakspear Restored, or a Specimen of the many Errors committed as well as unamended by Mr. Pope in his late edition of the Poet* (1726).

[2] Theobald was a Greek scholar of considerable knowledge, which (as Mr. Elwin has sufficiently demonstrated) Pope was not, and published translations of plays of Sophocles and Aristophanes. He adapted *Richard II* for the stage (1720), and published as Shakspere's a play called *The Double Falsehood* (1728), which is founded on the story of Cardenio in *Don Quixote*, and is thought to have been very probably written by Shirley. See Dyce's edition of Shirley's *Works*, vol. i. p. lix; and for an account of the play, Geneste, iii. 205.

[3] Thimm, *Shakspeariana*, p. 5.

Press, which called forth a tribute of recognition from the poet Collins[1]; Warburton's (1747), intended, like so much that Warburton did, to vindicate Pope at the expense of his adversaries, and to raise himself to eminence incidentally[2] (it is based upon Pope's edition, and is an improvement upon it); Blair's (1753); and Samuel Johnson's, which was, after a long delay, completed in 1765. Of this edition the Preface and the brief observations on the several plays form by far the most valuable portion. For a thorough textual criticism the time had perhaps hardly arrived, or at all events, Johnson hardly possessed the necessary qualifications, besides being hampered by the physical difficulty of a defective eyesight. At the same time the dialectical ingenuity and straightforwardness of his critical intellect, the robustness of his memory, and the considerable acquaintance to which he had attained with as much of our earlier literature as was in his time known to any but a few professed antiquaries, frequently helped him to conjectures which have since gained general acceptance. On the other hand, he brought to the study of Shakspere the full power of a large and, in the best sense, liberal mind. He was indeed still under the influence of the literary tastes of the Augustan age. He could not conceive of a poet greater than Pope. He could think a merely neutral-tinted passage of Congreve's superior to anything that Shakspere had ever written. And, moreover, the bent of his mind was not poetical; nor could it be expected that Johnson should exhibit a full appre-

Warburton's (1747).

Blair's (1753).

Johnson's (1765).

Johnson as a critic of Shakspere.

[1] See Collins' *Epistle addressed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, on his edition of Shakespeare's Works.* These lines show a warm admiration for Shakspere on the part of Collins, who speaks of him as 'the perfect boast of time.' The distinction which he draws between Shakspere and Fletcher is the same as that made by Dryden. Collins' observation, that while Fletcher was a master in the depiction of female passion—

> 'Stronger Shakespear felt for man alone:
> Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand
> The unrivall'd picture of his early hand'—

is at the same time exceedingly short-sighted.

[2] Foote's joke (the best, according to his own judgment, he ever made), about 'Warburton upon Shakspere,' will be remembered.

ciation of Shakspere, when even Goldsmith was without it[1]. But he was wise and broad-minded enough to reject with scorn the 'minute and slender criticisms of Voltaire,' and to see the truth about the 'unities' which a Dryden had been incapable of seeing. 'Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it to be lamented that they were not known to him, or not observed; nor if such another poet should arise, should I very vehemently reproach him that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus[2]. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticisms of Voltaire.' This is written in the true spirit of criticism; for it is written in acknowledgment of the claims of creative genius. As Lessing so truly says[3], the artist of genius contains in himself the test of all rules, and only understands, retains and follows those among them which express his feeling in words. In other words, as genius varies, so the application of rules must be varied; and it is only by an endeavour to understand the intellectual life and developement of a great artist (or indeed of any artist whom it is worth while to criticise at all) that the critic can vindicate his right to be heard as

[1] See, in illustration of this remark, chap. x. (*On the Stage*) of Goldsmith's *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning* (1750).

[2] This criticism had already been urged with great show of wit in Rymer's *Short View:* 'For the second act, our Poet having dispatcht his affairs at Venice, shews the action next (I know not how many leagues off) in the Island of Cyprus. The audience must be there too; and yet our Bays had it never in his head, to make any provision of Transport ships for them.'

[3] Cf. Stahr's *G. E. Lessing*, i. 326.



a guide,—the sole end of his functions, however he may think of them himself[1].

In addition to this insight into the nature of true literary criticism, Johnson was a faithful and acute observer of human character; and his psychological comments, simple and to the point notwithstanding their grandiloquence of diction, will frequently be found to furnish assistance, where the more ambitious efforts of his successors have a tendency to obscure.

Johnson and Steevens' edition (1773).

In a subsequent edition (1773) Johnson had the advantage of the co-operation of Steevens, who had already edited a reprint from the Quartos of twenty of Shakspere's plays, and of a variety of information and suggestions furnished by Dr. Farmer, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and well known as a Shaksperean scholar. His essay *On the Learning of Shakspere*, which both Johnson and Warton declared to have permanently settled the question at issue[2], had first appeared in 1767. Johnson and Steevens' edition had been preceded by that of Capell (1767), of which the Preface was severely commented on by Johnson, but has received high praise from later editors as 'by far the most valuable contribution to Shakespearian criticism that had yet appeared[3].' But

Farmer's essay (1767).

Capell's edition (1767).

[1] It need not be added that the history of the classical drama in itself suffices to teach the necessity of keeping in view the relation between rules and the rights of creative power. Already Ben Jonson very properly says, after touching on the progressive character of the history of Classical Comedy: 'We should enjoy the same licence, or free power to illustrate and heighten our invention as they [the ancients] did; and not be tied to those strict and regular forms which the niceness of a few, who are nothing but form, would thrust upon us.' See Introduction to *Every Man out of his Humour*.

[2] Dr. Johnson's compliment is, however, deprived of its value by his observation in answer to Colman's query on the same subject, 'What says Farmer to this? what says Johnson?' 'Sir, let Farmer answer for himself: *I* never engaged in this controversy. I always said that Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English.' See Langton's *Collectanea* in Croker's *Boswell*, vii. 365.

[3] *Cambridge Shakespeare*, i. xxxvi. Capell devoted his whole life to the illustration of Shakspere; his edition took twenty-three years to prepare; but when it appeared it had 'neither notes nor commentary, save the critical matter dispersed through the introduction, and a brief account of the origin of the fables of the several plays; with a table of the different editions.' Thimm, *Shakspeariana*, p. 7. He also omitted in the printed copy to state the sources of the emenda-

Malone's (1790).

Reed's (1803–13) and Boswell's (1821) *variorum*.

Activity of Shakspere scholarship.

Johnson and Steevens' edition was several times republished, and to it contributions were made by Edmond Malone, who in 1790 published an edition of his own, containing a number of dissertations and essays displaying most extensive research and learning. The so-called *variorum* editions of Reed (1803 and 1813) and of Boswell (1821) are based in the main on the labours of Johnson, Steevens, and Malone; and the last-mentioned for the present remains the fullest storehouse of English Shakspere-learning of the old school. Many other editions were published in these years and those immediately succeeding, which it would serve no purpose to enumerate here[1]. They were accompanied by a large variety of critical tracts, and provoked a considerable amount of controversy. In every size and every form, in folio and in miniature, illustrated with ponderous splendour and expurgated by timid prudery, Shakspere was now in the hands of the reading public; and it has been calculated that during the eighteenth century alone as many as 30,000 copies of Shakspere's works were dispersed through England[2].

Influence of French taste on the criticism of Shakspere.

Thus the greatest English poet had at last been popularised among his fellow-countrymen, while another influence (of which immediately) had with renewed force contributed to the same result. Yet it was only gradually that the English mind, in securing its inheritance, had freed itself from the hampering control of foreign tastes. Addison[3] had been of some service to a recognition of the claims of Shakspere at their full height, if not in their full

tions. Three quarto volumes of Notes and Various Readings were published after Capell's death (1783).

[1] It is interesting to learn (see *Academy*, April 11, 1874) that an edition of Shakspere was contemplated, and actually commenced, by Sir W. Scott. Three volumes (not including the introductory, to which Scott's own labours were to be chiefly confined) were printed by 1826, and a copy of them exists in the Public Library of Boston, U.S.

[2] Thimm, *Shakspeariana*, p. 8. The most gigantic monument of individual enthusiasm for Shakspere belonging to the eighteenth century is Richard Warner's *Glossary* of his plays, which, in seventy-one volumes in quarto and octavo, remains—still in MS.—in the British Museum. *Ib.* p. 6.

[3] See *e.g. The Spectator*, Nos. 141, 419.

breadth; but of the whole series of works concerning Shakspere during the eighteenth century the earlier were still under the tyranny of a literary taste due in its origin to French influence. The supreme oracle of this taste in his day was Voltaire, to whom his countrymen were in many respects justified in looking up as their intellectual leader, but who as a poet and a poetical critic was substantially a mere pupil of the past. Voltaire, moreover, had in him nothing of the true dramatic poet; a fact of which it is impossible to give better proof than that furnished by Talma, when he accounted for his having ceased to perform in Voltaire's plays by saying he could no longer find 'assez de pâture' (*stuff* enough) in them. Whatever novelties Voltaire might from time to time introduce into his dramas for the purpose of temporary effect, he was at bottom a French pseudo-classicist of a narrow kind. With the ancients themselves he was at the most very superficially acquainted, and he frequently speaks of them with a contempt by no means the result of familiarity[1]. In the years 1726–8 Voltaire was in England, when he enjoyed the incense which he loved, and made that kind of acquaintance with our poetical literature which is gathered by such visitors. It was then that he discovered Shakspere; and after he had returned to France, he soon undertook to introduce the rude genius of nature to the atmosphere of culture.

Voltaire.

Shakspere was, however, previously not wholly unknown in France. In the middle of the seventeenth century Bergerac had borrowed thoughts and even phrases from Shakspere in his tragedy of *Agrippina;* and a MS. translation of *Hamlet* existed before Voltaire made his famous attempt at analysing the tragedy for the benefit of the Academy, and showing how Shakspere ought to have written the famous soliloquy:

Early French knowledge of Shakspere.

> 'Demeure, il faut choisir, et passer à l'instant
> De la vie à la mort, et de l'être au néant[2].'

It was in 1735 that he began his 'translation' of *Julius*

[1] Cf. for proofs of this, Hettner's *Literaturgesch. des 18. Jahrh.*, ii. 230.

[2] Cf. K. Elze, *Hamlet in Frankreich* in *Jahrbuch, &c.*, vol. i. (1865).

Voltaire and Shakspere (1735 *seqq.*).

Caesar; and the spirit in which he set about the task was precisely that in which our Restoration writers had regarded the dramatist in whom they found so surprisingly many good things. 'Shakspere,' he wrote in this year, 'the Corneille of London, for the rest a downright madman (*grand fou*), and more often resembling Gilles[1] than Corneille; but he has very fine bits (*des morceaux admirables*).' And in 1748 came out the famous preface to Voltaire's *Semiramis*, where it is stated that 'apparently Nature took delight in assembling in the one head of Shakspere all that can be imagined of the truly strong and truly great, together with all that coarseness without wit (*grossièreté sans esprit*) can possess of the lowest of the low, and of the utterly detestable.' The tragedy of *Hamlet e.g.* was so rude and vulgar, that even the lowest mob in France or Italy would not tolerate its performance[1]. The means of arriving at a clear judgment were however limited in a public which was thus dictatorially apprised of the attitude which it ought to assume towards the barbarian brought across the seas; for as late as 1762 the French Academy, in returning thanks for Voltaire's translation of *Julius Caesar*, regretted that it had been unable to procure a copy of the original for purposes of comparison.

Ducis (1769 *seqq.*).

The fashion was now set. In 1769 Ducis favoured the Parisian public with his *Hamlet*, in which, mindful of the great master's warning, he undertook to disengage the northern light of Shakspere from the fogs surrounding it. He improved the play by omitting, not indeed the part of Hamlet, but that of the Ghost, or at least never allowing the latter to appear on the stage, and by making Ophelia the daughter of Claudius, so as further to elevate her lover. Moreover, Hamlet is kept alive at the close, and thus enabled to end with a fine piece of moral claptrap: 'I shall know how to live, which is more than to die.' The same author's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*

[1] Hettner, ii. 232-3. 'Gille,' according to the *Dict. de l'Académie*, is 'un personage du spectacle de la foire.' Voltaire borrowed the Ghost, as well as the murder by mistake behind the arras, from *Hamlet* for his *Eryphile*. Elze, *u. s.*, p. 89. He likewise borrowed from other plays in a similar way.



are merely 'founded on' Shakspere; and, in short, the ingenious French author was merely using the English dramatist after the fashion in which he is still used, and in which English audiences suffer him to be used, for librettos of operas,—not that Ducis, as it seems to me, is without merits of his own; but a discussion of these is beyond my subject. His *Hamlet* was so successful as to be translated into both Italian and Dutch.

Voltaire and his followers (1776 *seqq.*).

Voltaire was by no means well-pleased with this success; but it would be wrong to attribute to mere jealousy the tone of his later criticisms of Shakspere, which is upon the whole consistent in its inconsistency. In his *Letters to the Academy* (1776) Shakspere is saluted as a drunken savage, a clumsy rope-dancer, a mountebank in rags, a miserable ape, a Thespis, who however at times could also be a Sophocles, and among filthy drunkards frequently also created heroes in whose features majesty was to be found[1]. In short, the judgment implied in these amenities was always the same; and was faithfully repeated by Voltaire's literary pupils, the voluminous Laharpe (1739–1803), and J. L. Geoffroy (1743–1814), who again searches in vain in Shakspere for 'a trace of the ideas and manner of Sophocles[2].'

Voltaire answered by Mrs. E. Montagu (1769).

A spirited protest, to which this seems the most fitting place to advert, had been called forth by Voltaire's attacks upon Shakspere from an English lady of fashion and letters. Mrs. Elisabeth Montagu's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1769) was avowedly written in reply to Voltaire; and, though very harshly judged at the time of its publication by the great dictator of English literary criticism, attained to a long-enduring esteem which seems upon the whole well-merited. In our own day of course the book cannot be rated so high from the point of view of its absolute value. The style is certainly easy and agreeable, with just enough dignity to remind one that it was written by a scholar, and enough grace and wit to recall the lively woman of the world. Upon the whole, however, it is to be regarded rather as a very clever attack

[1] Hettner, ii. 232.

[2] Elze, p. 99.

upon Voltaire, both as a critic and a translator, and more especially upon the idol of the French stage, whose works Voltaire had edited,—Corneille. The soundness of the main positions of the writer being admitted, there is not much profundity of criticism or originality of illustration besides. The remarks on particular Shaksperean plays are by no means striking; but the passages on the excellence of the ordinary English dramatic metre, blank-verse, and the observations on Shakspere's treatment of the praeternatural[1], are well worth reading. Mrs. Montagu's book received many tributes of praise which it well deserved—among others the expression of what appear to have been Johnson's second, and juster, thoughts about it, how it was '*ad hominem*, conclusive against Voltaire,' and how its authoress 'had done, Sir, what she intended to do;' and, as late as 1788, enthusiastic praise from the poet Cowper. But its chief merit lay in the fearlessness of spirit which impelled its authoress to break a lance with so renowned an antagonist[2].

French translations of Shakspere (1745 *et post*).

Meanwhile translations of a more conscientious character than Voltaire's had begun to make their appearance in France. That of De la Place (1745–8) seems hardly to have deserved the name, though to it Ducis was chiefly indebted for his knowledge of the Shaksperean *Hamlet;* that of Letourneur (1776–82) was at least complete in outward form[3]. It drew down, chiefly on account of its enthusiastic preface, the curses of the aged Voltaire upon its author; but it attracted the sympathetic praises of Diderot, and would doubtless have led to a truer study of

[1] See in particular the very ingenious comparison between the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Ghost in the *Persae.*

[2] See, for an account of the reception of Mrs. Montagu's book, Dr. Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, pp. 148–156. According to the same biographer (p. 207), Mrs. Montagu was present in 1776 in the Academy at Paris during the reading of a furious paper by Voltaire against Shakspere. When the reading came to an end, Suard remarked to her: 'I think, madam, you must be rather sorry at what you have just heard!' The English lady, Voltaire's old adversary, promptly replied: 'I, sir! not at all. I am not one of M. de Voltaire's friends.'

[3] It bore the characteristically apologetic motto, 'Homo sum, humani nihil' (as Elze says,—not even Shakspere!) 'a me alienum puto.'



Shakspere, had not the times soon become so unfavourable to any approximation, even in the field of literature, between the two nations. The merit of having once more directed the attention of the French literary world to Shakspere belongs to Guizot and the other men of letters who in 1821 published a new edition of Letourneur's translation, although already in the times of the war and the Empire Mme. de Staël, doubtless under the influence of Schlegel, had in her book *de la Litérature* (1804) prepared French readers for the true appreciation of Shakspere's greatness which its successor *de l'Allemagne* (1814) more fully enforced. From the time of the publication of Guizot's first essay on the subject (followed at a later date (1852) by his *Shakspeare et son temps*) French criticism on Shakspere might well claim to be no longer considered as an echo of Voltaire; nor am I aware that the complaint of a recent French writer on Shakspere, to the effect that this view is entertained, or pretended to be entertained, of French writers by their German contemporaries, is quite borne out[1]. At all events, Englishmen will be ready to acknowledge the admirable character of much of the criticism, pleasing in form as well as in part weighty in matter, which a long series of French writers have contributed to the study of Shakspere; and the zeal which, in spite of difficulties of a far graver kind than those which the Germans have to meet, has been shown by recent French translators of the poet. Guizot, Villemain, Philarète Chasles and others are remembered with something more than respect wherever the study of Shakspere is cherished. Even the rhapsody by which M. Victor Hugo in 1864 sought to aid the publication of his son's translation of Shakspere was received with goodwill by readers not always able to apprehend the precise meaning of the utterances of its gifted author. It may be hoped that the time is not distant when French art may yet render the greatest service which it is capable of rendering

French criticism and translations of Shakspere in the present century.

Mme. de Staël (1804 *et post*).

Guizot (1821 *et post*).

Villemain; Ph. Chasles; Victor Hugo, &c.

[1] See the Preface to A. Mézières, *Shakspeare, ses œuvres, et ses critiques* (1860).

to Shakspere's genius, and open to its creations, worthily interpreted, the doors of the first theatre in Europe[1].

Shakspere and the English stage in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Thus, then, both in England and after the imperfect fashion described in France, the fame of Shakspere had in the course of the eighteenth century progressed towards its height in the world of letters. The final impulse to the full literary recognition of the poet was to come from yet another quarter; but meanwhile his works had at last had an opportunity of appealing to popular sympathy in all its fulness in his own land. A few words on the general history of the English stage in the eighteenth century will find a more appropriate place elsewhere; but no sketch of the growth of the knowledge and appreciation of Shakspere ought to omit a grateful mention of the services rendered to his name and fame by Garrick. In him genius of a high order gave aid, such as it alone can furnish, to that of the very highest.

Garrick (1741–1776.)

David Garrick was born in 1716; but the birthday of his theatrical career was the 19th of October, 1741, when, in a small theatre near Goodman's Fields, he made his first appearance in London (*incognito*, for he had adopted the profession of the stage against the wishes of his family), in the character of Richard III. 'That young man,' said Pope, who had been induced to come up from his retirement to witness this performance, 'never had his equal, and never will have a rival.' Actors, who are to a great extent deprived of the sweet anticipation of posthumous fame, at least escape the bitterness which at times lies in the adjustment of reputations by comparison. Yet, so far as it is possible to judge in such a case, the history of the English stage seems to have justified Pope's confident prophecy. From the very be-

[1] A *Hamlet* arranged by A. Dumas and Paul Meurice was acted at the Théatre Historique in 1847; and a *Macbeth* revised by E. Deschamps, produced at the Odéon in 1848, had a run of 100 nights. George Sand was the first to produce a French version of a Shaksperean comedy—*Comme il vous plaira*. (Elze.) The present time, when for whatever reasons a renewed interest in tragedy is perceptible in the audiences of the Théatre Français, seems especially favourable to a bold attempt to domesticate Shakspere on its classic boards.



ginning of his career Garrick occupied an unapproached, though at first not uncontested, pre-eminence in his profession. His unparalleled success seems to have been due, in very unequal proportion, to three causes. First, to his birth, breeding, and natural gifts: he had some French blood in his veins; he was gently born and gently nurtured, and nature had given him an eye, if not a stature, to command, and a mimic power of inexhaustible variety. Secondly, to his education: both that which he had received at the hands of his teachers (Johnson was one of them), and that which to the last he continued to give to himself. He loved literature, not merely because of its connexion with the profession which he had adopted, but because of an innate and carefully developed taste; he was himself not without literary endowment; and patient study made him a scholar among actors, until he could hold his own as an actor among scholars[1]. Thirdly, and above all, to his genius, which at many points placed him in direct contact with the genius of Shakspere, and enabled him intuitively to perceive and immediately to reproduce the essence of those characters which the ordinary actor, like the ordinary reader, sees only dimly or in a more or less shadowy outline[2].

His services to Shakspere.

But I must here confine myself to Garrick's direct services to Shakspere. It can hardly be doubted that the *Richard III* in which he first appeared was Colley Cibber's version; on the other hand, it is certain that *King Lear* and *King John* followed in the same year, and *Macbeth* not long afterwards, in the original text. So unaccustomed had the public and the actors become to this original text, that Garrick's rival, Quin, asked him where

[1] It was with the view, never of course realised, of publishing an edition of Shakspere, that Garrick formed the collection of old plays now in the British Museum.

[2] 'His' (Shakspere's) 'very spirit,' says Mrs. Montagu in the Introduction to her *Essay*, 'seems to come forth and animate his characters, as often as Mr. Garrick, who acts with the same inspiration with which he wrote, assumes them on the stage.' It was therefore a well-merited tribute, and no commonplace compliment, when Churchill, in his *Rosciad*, made Shakspere himself assign the palm to Garrick.

he had picked up all the strange words which he had introduced into the play. In 1748, *Romeo and Juliet*, which had not been acted for more than eighty years, was again produced; and, to sum up, I find from the lists given by Garrick's most recent biographer[1], that during his career Garrick himself appeared in seventeen different Shaksperean characters; while during his management of Drury Lane (which lasted from 1747 to 1776) he produced altogether not less than twenty-four of Shakspere's plays. Thus he came very near to realising the plan conceived about this time by Frederick Prince of Wales (who delighted in playing the patron of literature), of producing successively on the stage every one of Shakspere's dramas.

I have no desire to overrate the services of this indefatigable interpreter to the poet with whose fame he thus identified his own. Garrick was of course not solely moved to these exertions by his admiration for Shakspere's genius. As an actor, and still more as a manager, he was obliged to consult the taste of his public,—nor was his own taste—how could it have been?—on the highest level of pure sympathy with Shakspere's poetic genius. He therefore treated many of the Shaksperean plays which he produced with arbitrary self-will; he mutilated several of the comedies, and allowed himself alterations and interpolations even in some of the tragedies,—in *Hamlet*, hitherto untouched by English adapters, itself. But the essence of the service which he rendered was this: not only that he gave a new and unprecedented impulse to the popular admiration of the genius of Shakspere, but that he practically corrected the false view which contemporary literary criticism, even in such a writer as Johnson, had accustomed itself to take of the intrinsic rudeness and imperfection of this pre-Augustan poet. Garrick showed, by the quickest and least disputable method of interpretation, that Shakspere's art is supremely adequate to its ends; and thus he vindicated for Shakspere's genius that which even well-meaning critics and

[1] P. Fitzgerald, *Life of Garrick*, 2 vols. (1868).

editors had hitherto been prone to deny to it. Remembering this, we may well omit any reference to the excesses and extravagances into which Garrick was hurried by a vanity which, taking into consideration not only the general nature but the special circumstances of his career, is hardly to be termed exorbitant, but which was certainly perceptible. We may even pass by the monstrous farce of the Shakspere Jubilee at Stratford on the Bicentenary of the poet's birthday in 1769, which is at the same time significant of the subsidiary fact that in making Shakspere popular Garrick had also succeeded in making him fashionable. Since Garrick, Shakspere has in good times as in evil been held in supreme honour on the English stage; it has been impossible either to deny his royalty or to make him entirely a *roi fainéant;* and to this day, though only a very limited number of his plays is acted, and though the less said as to the way in which they are acted the better, yet he at least enjoys exceptional esteem in the midst of a general degradation. Thus, since Garrick, Shakspere has never lost the *popularity* which it is the great actor's merit to have definitively and permanently established for his beloved master.

Shakspere permanently popularised in England.

It was thus that the nation which had given birth to Shakspere possessed itself of the real key to a just appreciation of its greatest poet, and attained to a perception of the truths, that nature and art are not antithetical to one another, and that in Shakspere they are not indeed uniformly and perfectly, but essentially and pervadingly, harmonised. Englishmen, after their fashion, had approached by a practical process, aided by scraps of theory, to an insight into both proposition and corollary. About the same time the same lesson was first impressed upon a kindred nation, with greater force and fulness of theory, though by no means to the dissociation of theory from practice. The writer who first placed the claims of Shakspere in a clear and indisputable light was the great German Lessing, one of the most original and most powerful critics of all times.

Lessing was far from being the first to introduce the

Early knowledge of Shaksperean plays in Germany: the 'English comedians.'

plays of Shakspere to the notice of his countrymen. In a previous chapter brief reference has been made to the intimate connexion which existed in the latter part of the sixteenth century between the English and the German stage[1]. The precise proportion of action and reaction between them it remains difficult to determine; but it is certain that the presence of English actors is traceable in various German cities down to the middle of the seventeenth century, and that the number of English plays with which they familiarised German audiences was very considerable. These 'English comedians' were no doubt, latterly in particular, often Germans by birth; and of the plays which they performed many—perhaps even some of those which we can recognise as Shakspere's—may originally, if not modelled upon German prototypes, have owed their subjects to the traditions of German predecessors. What however is alone worth noting in this place, is the fact that a large number of dramas performed in Germany in this period were nothing more nor less than the reproductions of well-known English plays—the most popular pieces of Shakspere's predecessors and some of Shakspere's own. Thus within a few months of the year 1626 the 'English comedians' at Dresden performed an *Orlando Furioso*, a *Hieronymo Marschall*, a *Dr. Faust*, a *Barrabas Jew of Malta*,—and a *Romeo and Julietta*, a *Julius Caesar*, a *Hamlet prince in Denmark*, and a *Lear king in England*[2]. It was doubtless owing to direct influences of this description that dramatists like Duke Henry Julius of Brunswick and Jacob Ayrer wrote their works, whatever may be the nature of the relation between particular plays composed by them and their Shaksperean similars; the English 'comedies and tragedies' severally appeared in print[3]; and the German dramatists were therefore in every possible way supplied with models. Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664), who survived the Thirty Years' War, confessed to have taken his *Absurda Comica*, or *Herr Peter*

Early imitations and adaptations.

[1] *Ante*, p. 257.

[2] See the complete list in A. Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, pp. cxv–cxvi.

[3] *Ib.* pp. cviii *seqq.*

Squenz, from Daniel Schwenter (who died in 1636); but the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was undoubtedly at all events its primary source[1]. Christian Weise, whose *Comedy of the angry Catherine* was performed in 1705, must have been acquainted with Shakspere's *Taming of the Shrew*[2]. These examples must suffice to prove the indisputable fact that the knowledge of Shakspere's plays had not been wholly extinguished in Germany even by the blight which the political and social collapse of the nation spread over its intellectual activity.

But it was only as plays of unknown origin, brought over by English actors, that Shaksperean plays had thus become and remained known in Germany; and the influence which they helped to exercise upon the literary developement of such a writer as Gryphius exercised no important effect upon the progress of German literature. Other dramatists, such as Michael Kongehl, treated Shaksperean subjects without betraying the least direct acquaintance with the corresponding Shaksperean plays[3]. German literature, following the classicising direction first given to it by Opitz, and the German stage, taken possession of by the foreign importation of the opera, were equally estranged from those isolated examples of the English drama which, in a more or less mutilated form, may still have survived as lingering traditions of an earlier taste.

First German mention of Shakspere personally (1682).

Thus, as German literature gradually fell into bondage to French tastes, the beginnings of a knowledge of Shakspere were extinguished before they had attained to a definite developement. The name of the poet is for the first time mentioned in a German work in 1682; but its author confesses himself wholly unacquainted with Shakspere's works[4]. It recurs in 1704, but only in a quotation from

[1] Cohn, p. cxxx. Cf. as to Gryphius' acquaintance with Shakspere, Goedeke, *Elf Bücher deutschen Dichtung*, i. 374.

[2] Cohn, *u. s.*, seems convincing as against Genée, *Gesch. der Shakespeare'schen Dramen in Deutschland*, p. 52.

[3] Genée, *u. s.*; cf. Cohn, p. cxxxiii.

[4] In Morhoff's *Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache und Poësie*. Cf. Cohn, p. cxxxvi.

an English authority[1]. A few other references follow in later years; but Shakspere's name is conspicuous by its absence from the second edition of the *Kritische Dichtkunst* of Gottsched, the dictator of the German literary world in those days of bondage, published in 1737[2]. What is even more striking, in 1740 and 1741, Bodmer, a friend and supporter of the claims of English literature to an influence upon that of his native country, while twice adverting to the poet under the names of 'Saspar' and 'Sasper,' at least betrays no knowledge of him at first hand, though I confess that I agree in seeing no proof to the contrary in his Germanisation of the spelling of the name[3]. In the latter of these very years (1741) the first attempt at translating Shakspere into German was made by C. W. von Borck, who published a version of *Julius Caesar* in Alexandrines. But though signs now appear of an awakening on the part of literary critics, such as John Elias Schlegel and even Gottsched himself, to the fact of Shakspere's literary existence,—the one damns him with faint praise, the other still treats him with lofty contempt,—twenty years were still to pass before in 1762 Wieland began the translation of Shakspere which was first to open a knowledge of the author to the German literary public[4]. This translation, of which Wieland accomplished twenty-two plays, was completed by Eschenburg in 1775. It was, with the single exception of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in prose.

Bodmer's 'Sasper' (1740–1).

First German translation of a Shaksperean play (1741).

Wieland and Eschenburg's translation (1762–1775).

In Germany, however, the beginnings of criticism had preceded the first sustained attempts at translation; and before Wieland had put forth the first instalment of his labours, and before the stage had begun effectively to second his endeavours, the mighty intellect of Lessing had entered the arena, where his efforts accomplished

Beginnings of German Shakspere-criticism.

[1] Viz. Sir William Temple, in Barthold Feind's *Gedanken von der Opera*. Cf. *ib.*

[2] Thimm, *u. s.*, p. 51.

[3] See K. Elze, *Bodmer's Sasper* in *Jahrbuch, &c.*, vol. i. (1865).

[4] Cf. A. Koberstein's summary of the origin and progress of the knowledge and love of Shakspere in Germany: *Shakespeare in Deutschland*, in the same volume of the same Journal.

even more than establishing on a firm basis the literary deserts of the greatest of modern dramatic poets. But it is in this particular direction only that they are here to be touched upon. The *Literaturbriefe* of Lessing (1758), which boldly threw down the challenge to Gottsched as the representative of French taste and of its dominion in German literature, asserted in round terms the superiority of Shakspere to Corneille, and denied the claims of the French drama to be regarded as truly modelled upon the example of the ancients, whom it indeed approached more nearly in mechanical arrangement, while Shakspere came nearer to them in the essentials of his art. 'The Englishman almost invariably attains to the end of tragedy, however peculiar and proper to himself the ways may be which he chooses; while the Frenchman hardly ever attains to it, although he treads the levelled paths of the ancients[1].'

Lessing (1758 *et post*).

Lessing had, after a few youthful imitations, began his own original career as a dramatist by a work[2] founded upon English models,—but these models themselves belonged to a hybrid school, resulting from the union into which, under the influence of prose fiction, domestic tragedy and sentimental comedy had entered during the decay of our dramatic literature. As a dramatist and as a critic he was led to a close and careful study of the stage, and to an examination of the real merits and demerits of those French plays—above all of Voltaire's—which then held supreme sway over it. Voltaire he had moreover had early occasion to observe with particular attention; and thus from a critical examination of the French school Lessing naturally proceeded to a comparison of it with the Elisabethan, and in particular (though not exclusively) the Shaksperean drama. The foremost actor of Germany, Schröder, was about this time rendering a service to

Lessing's developement as a critic of the drama.

[1] *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betrelfend*, No. xvii. This letter is a direct attack upon Gottsched and the French tragic poets; and contains a specimen of Lessing's uncompleted *Dr. Faust* as a proof how large an English element there is in some of the old German plays.

[2] *Miss Sara Sampson*, 1755.

Shakspere in Germany not dissimilar to that rendered by Garrick in England; and the endeavour permanently to establish a German 'national theatre' at Hamburg, though it ended in failure, was a challenge to the expiring predominance of French taste. It will not be forgotten that this was the period in which the victories of Frederick the Great had at last inspired the German mind with a national consciousness, and when the rout of Rossbach had broken the illusion of the invincible superiority of France.

Lessing's Hamburger Dramaturgie (1767–9). Principles of his criticism.

It was under such influences that, in his *Hamburger Dramaturgie* (1767–9), Lessing first revealed the laws of true dramatic criticism to the moderns. The fact that the undertaking which his comments were intended to foster came to an end, and that the jealousies of the actors rendered it unpleasant for him to make the criticism of their performances the main subject of discussion, widened the scope of his arguments, and elevated his enquiries, though necessarily fragmentary in form, to what they ultimately became. '*Primus sapientiae gradus*,' he said, '*est falsa intelligere*.' The idea of Voltaire that the object of the drama is to enforce a moral, is false; he has misunderstood the ancients; and out of the flaming pyre of Shaksperean poetry he has only possessed himself here and there of a solitary faggot, one which smokes and sputters rather than lights and warms. Again, the idea of Voltaire, that the object of the drama is to teach historical truth, is false; 'the tragic poet makes use of a story not because it has happened, but because it has happened after such a fashion, that he could with difficulty invent a better for his present purpose. If he by accident finds this fittingness in a real event, he welcomes that real event; but to burrow among history-books for the purpose is not worth his while. . . . On the stage we have to learn, not what this or that man actually did, but what any and every man of a certain character would have done under certain given circumstances. The end of tragedy is far more philosophical than that of history; and it is to degrade the former from its true dignity to convert it into a mere panegyric of

famous men, or, which is worse, to misuse it for the fostering of national pride.' Thirdly, the rules which Voltaire and the school to which he belongs set up as the essential rules, are not carried out by them except in mere externals; and in these often coarsely and clumsily. Aristotle's definition of tragedy they have not even comprehended. They have neither understood his meaning in speaking of tragic fear and of compassion as the motives of tragic effect, nor his establishment of the purification of the passions by those emotions as the end of tragedy. The result is that no true tragedy is to be found among the French and their imitators.

But, '*secundus sapientiae gradus est vera cognoscere.*' Firstly, the so-called perfect characters have no place in tragedy. Secondly, the bad is admissible there, as the hideous is admissible in art, where it is terrible. Thirdly, dramatic characters must have an inner unity. Characters are treated after a different fashion in tragedy and in comedy, because in the former they constitute the main element, whereas the situations are only the means for furnishing them with expression; in comedy the situations are the main element. On this basis Lessing constructed his theory of the drama, and in this he reconciled Shakspere with the Greeks. At the same time he distinctly pointed out that 'a perfect work of art has a claim to emancipate itself even from the rule which keeps asunder the ends of tragedy and comedy; and thus where the same event in its progress assumes all the various shades of human interest, the one not merely following upon, but springing out of, the other, where laughter is produced by tears, or sorrow from joy, there criticism demands no abstraction of the one from the other in the work of art in question; art contriving to reap an advantage from the impossibility of such an abstraction.' This is the justification of the method of the romantic drama,—the justification of Shakspere[1].

These fragmentary extracts are merely intended to in-

[1] The above quotations are taken from the analysis of the *Dramaturgie* in Stahr's *Lessing*, vol. i. pp. 328–361.

dicate the general standpoint of Lessing in his victorious campaign, which has a positive as well as a negative side both in its principles and in its results. Of its effect upon the dramatic literature of Germany, in the works of Lessing himself and his successors, this is not the place to speak.

Herder.

Herder, whose influence was so fructifying for the new era of German literature, even advanced upon Lessing's critical attitude towards Shakspere. In general, the young geniuses of the *Sturm und Drang*—and those writers in particular who assumed a genius, if they had it not—were very little anxious as to the possibility of harmonising Shakspere and Aristotle, or Shakspere and any theory of art. To them Shakspere was the type of an original genius[1], and the worship of him an emancipation from the dominion of the ancients, 'life' after school, license after a narrow discipline. The successive volumes of Wieland's and Eschenburg's translations scattered a seed which fell upon a ready soil and sprang up in all kinds of fruit. The extravagant enthusiasm of Lenz (who translated *Love's Labour's Lost* under the title of *Amor vincit omnia*) found expression in a variety of tributes; he speaks of Shakspere's diction as that of the boldest genius, moving earth and heaven in order to find expression for the ideas flowing into him; of his characters as unacquainted with the deadly influence of comfortable prosperity, &c. &c. He rejoiced in the Elisabethans as having presented before the public Nature as God had created her! Klinger and others sought in their works to follow in the footsteps of this idol of realism. The entire school of the *Sturm und Drang* had Shakspere—Shakspere as they saw him—on the brain[2].

The Sturm und Drang.

Goethe.

None of the young poets of the age was more under the influence of Shakspere than Goethe; as a student at Strassburg he harangued his friends on Shakspere and

[1] Koberstein, in the essay already quoted, has remarked on the influence exercised in Germany by Young's letter *On Original Composition*, published in 1759, and made known to Germany in two translations. The original was addressed to Richardson. See Mitford's *Life of Young*, p. xlii (Aldine edition).

[2] Cf. C. C. Hense, *Deutsche Dichter in ihren Verhältniss zu Shakespeare* (I.), in *Jahrbuch, &c.*, vol. v (1870).

Nature with all the exuberant rhetoric of youth[1]; and afterwards in his *Götz von Berlichingen*, and to some extent in *Egmont*, he 'liberated himself' after his fashion from this phase of his literary developement[2]. Others of his works contain direct reminiscences of Shakspere; and his criticism of *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meister*, a work which is by no means only incidentally in contact with Shakspere's tragedy, is well known. Some of its observations undoubtedly require modification; as a whole it is a labour of love, and a marvellous proof of intellectual sympathy. Less pleasing is the attempt of Goethe to adapt *Romeo and Juliet* after a very arbitrary fashion for the Weimar stage (1811); by the side of which, though less markedly open to objection, may be placed Schiller's version of *Macbeth* (1800). The most fruitful influence exercised by Shakspere upon Schiller's own developement as a dramatist is doubtless to be sought, not in the 'strong' characters of his early plays, but in the dramatic treatment of history which he adopted in his maturest works. It was his intention to arrange all the plays of Shakspere which treat of the Wars of the Roses as a series for representation on the stage,—an intention not carried out by him, but realised long afterwards on the boards of the Weimar theatre[3].

It would, however, carry me too far to dwell on the influence of Shakspere upon the literature of the nation which had thus rapidly learnt to love and cherish him. No similar example of the domestication of a great writer of one nation in the very heart and mind of another is known to the history of the world. It would, however, have been impossible but for the labours of a writer whose name is entitled to perpetual remembrance in conjunction with that of the poet whom, it is not too much to say, he bestowed upon a whole people. It was shortly after

The Schlegel-Tieck translation (from 1797).

[1] See Lewes' *Life of Goethe*.

[2] So he told Eckermann. Hense, *u. s.*, p. 130.

[3] At the Tercentenary of Shakspere's birth. For an estimate of Shakspere's influence upon Schiller see a second essay by C. C. Hense in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi (1871).

Goethe had in his *Wilhelm Meister* rekindled the enthusiasm of the literary public for Shakspere, that August Wilhelm Schlegel began his immortal translation[1]. Immortal,—not as absolutely perfect or entitled to remain intact; but because of the adequateness which, in the history of translations, characterises it above all others, and because of the unparalleled results to which it led. Between the years 1797 and 1801 seventeen plays were translated by Schlegel, the remainder were slowly added by Tieck, assisted by Count Wolf von Baudissin and 'another translator, who desires to remain unnamed,'—Tieck's daughter Dorothea. The work was thus not actually complete till 1833.

Schlegel's greatness as a translator.

The great—the all-important—innovation which distinguished Schlegel's translation from its predecessors was the fact of his having followed the form of his original,—translating verse into verse, and prose into prose. Its supreme merit lay in the endeavour of its author to realise what he had, in an essay in Schiller's *Horen*, described as the ideal of a true translation, 'following step by step the letter of the sense (*den Buchstaben des Sinnes*), and yet catching part of the innumerable, indescribable beauties which do not lie in the letter, but hover above it like an intellectual spirit.' As the poet is born such, so Schlegel, it has been well said, was a born artist in translation. Like Herder's and Voss's, his place in German poetic literature is greater as a translator than as an original writer. He was master of the language which his labours enriched; and proved himself intellectually akin to the author whom he reproduced[2].

Other German translations.

Translations by Voss and others preceded and followed the tardy completion of the Schlegel-Tieck edition; and the activity of German Shakspere-scholars is to this day directed to the revision and emendation of the labours of their predecessors. These efforts it would not become me

[1] See M. Bernays, *Der Schlegel-Tieck'sche Shakespeare*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. i (1865).

[2] I prefer to use the expressions of Bernays; but it is with a grateful feeling of a personal character that I dwell on the merits of Schlegel's translation.

to criticise; but to no department of literary work in connexion with Shakspere is a warmer acknowledgment due than to this, the humblest in semblance, the most fruitful in its results.

Schlegel, Tieck, and the Romantic School as critics of Shakspere.

But Schlegel and Tieck were not only translators, they were also critics, of Shakspere. Scattered contributions to the criticism of Shakspere had appeared in Schiller's *Horen* from the hand of A. W. Schlegel before the publication of the first instalment of his translation; he, his brother Frederick, Tieck, Novalis, and other members of the Romantic School frequently addressed themselves to the subject, and to that of the Elisabethan drama generally, elsewhere. But it was not until the Romantic School had long after the period of its first efforts settled into an endeavour to define to itself its ends and aims, while the greatest poets of the nation had long become estranged from its tendencies, that Schlegel published those *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1817)[1] which may be described as the first definite attempt at comprehensive aesthetical criticism of Shakspere. Schlegel, and still more emphatically Tieck, whose *Letters on Shakespeare* had appeared in 1800, and who in a variety of prefatory essays returned to the subject, were far from being infallible as critics. In their eagerness to combat the prejudices of the past they neglected the first part of the critic's task, the discrimination of their materials; Tieck's views in particular as to the 'doubtful' plays (generally the reverse of doubtful in his eyes) frequently excite no other feeling than that of respectful amazement; while Schlegel's inordinate self-esteem led him to place more reliance upon his own judgment than if he had been to Shakspere what 'E. K.' was to Spenser, or what Warburton persuaded Pope he was to Pope. Moreover, Schlegel, much as he affected the man of genius and the man of the world, was, if I may so say, heart and soul a professor. Everything that he knew or thought he craved to put at once into a teachable and an impressive form; he shaded

[1] An English translation by John Black was published in 1818, and reprinted in 1840.

off Shakspere's plays into more or less arbitrary groups, while justly ridiculing—as Polonius-like—the attempt to tabulate them in precise classes[1]; his characterisations of the several dramas are often provokingly concise, and his statement of the meaning of each play and character is at times perplexingly oracular. The reputation of his merits as a Shaksperean critic, however, stands no higher than it deserves to stand, even after the efforts of his successors to surpass, and occasionally to exaggerate, his own. He had a sure aesthetic feeling, genuine power of psychological insight, a warm receptivity for poetic beauty of the most various kinds,—he left Shakspere for Calderon,—and a learning unprecedented, if not unsurpassed. Tieck's merits lie within narrower limits; but his sympathy was equal, and fed by a perhaps superior degree of creative power of his own; as an actor he might perhaps have rendered another kind of service to Shakspere, for those who were admitted to his readings are unanimous in describing them as unique in their excellence.

Later German Shakspere-criticism.

It is beyond my power to enumerate the endeavours of German Shakspere-criticism since the impulse was given to it by Schlegel. Far from merely following in his wake, like Franz Horn (whom Heine was certain of meeting close beside Schlegel in that region of another world to which all critics are condemned), they have pursued and are pursuing various paths and various methods. That of Gervinus is well known to English students, whose debt to him is great[2]. His criticism is essentially of the historical kind, and directs itself to the moral rather than the aesthetical aspects of his subject[3]. Thoroughly commanding his materials, he proceeds to build up a coherent whole; and perspicuously tabulates the whole literary developement of Shakspere according to its successive stages, thus writing what may perhaps be called the best history of the poet's

Gervinus.

[1] See *Lectures*, vol. ii. Part ii. pp. 91 *seqq.* (Original).

[2] His *Shakespeare Commentaries* have been translated into English by Miss Bunnett (1862); his main work, however, remains untranslated.

[3] Cf. a few generous words recording the death of Gervinus by his most eminent fellow-labourer, Ulrici, in the *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi (1871).

genius extant. In Ulrici, of whose unflagging labours in connexion with Shakspere and the Elisabethan drama only a small (though most important) part is in the hands of English readers[1], the deductive method is more prominently interwoven with the historical; he is the real chief of the later school of German Shakspere-critics, the keynote to whose system is the internal evolution of literary progress, and, in reference to the individual genius of Shakspere, the conviction that each of his works has a fundamental idea, so that together they form a harmonious and self-complementary whole. The labours of Simrock in connexion with the sources of Shakspere's plays seem to call for special mention, though it is rather in the comprehensive (at times all too comprehensive) spirit of a comparative mythologist than that of a historical enquirer that he has added to the results of the labours of English Shakspere-scholars in this field[2].

Ulrici.

Simrock.

I will mention no further names, lest omission should seem to imply disregard; most of them are written, with proofs of the deserts of their owners, in the pages of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*[3], a treasure-house of learning, and the fittest memorial which the piety of German Shakspere-scholars could have raised to the object of their devotion. No Englishman will dispute the right of German Shakspere-scholars to take an honest pride in the spirit as well as in the results of their single-minded labours, or deny them the pleasure of calling Shakspere their own. He cannot be denationalised by their love for him; but he can be made more and more what it is his destiny to become, the poet above all others of the Germanic race, and through it of civilisation at large. With such an end in view, needless boasts may be received with kindly good-humour, and extravagant claims dismissed in silence[4]. There is no

Recent German study of Shakspere.

[1] *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art and his relation to Calderon and Goethe* (1846).

[2] Second Edition, 1870. The first was translated into English, with additions, by Mr. Halliwell. (*Shakesp. Soc. Pubbl.*, 1850.)

[3] The annual publication began in the year of the Tercentenary of Shakspere's birth.

[4] Perhaps, however, I should make an exception in the case of an endeavour to prove Shakspere's intellectual nationality German, not English, based upon

branch of the study of Shakspere in which the labours of the Germans will not be warmly welcomed by ourselves, neither that of aesthetical criticism in which they have hitherto more especially shone, nor that of textual criticism in which the efforts of our own scholars are being seconded by theirs. Of the rivalry between the German and the English stage as artistic homes of Shakspere it would be unhappily a mockery to speak at the present day[1]. But it is to be hoped that the literary world of either nation may still find much to learn from that of the other; and, to conclude with a single confession, it may for instance be averred that a German scholar has solved a difficultywhich English editors are only gradually overcoming, and that the recent work of Delius furnishes a model of that species of popular and scholarly annotated edition of Shakspere of which no example in a complete form yet exists in his own country.

Translations of Shakspere into other foreign tongues.

To this I once more turn before concluding this rapid survey, passing over the contributions of other nations to the literature and study of Shakspere. His works have, it would appear[2], been translated, in whole or in part, into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Frisian, Bohemian, Hungarian, Walachian, 'Moslem Greek,' Polish, Russian, and Bengalee; and the literatures of more than one of these countries—in Denmark, I believe, theatre as well as literature—have contributed to the progress of a conscientious and productive study of the poet.

Popular knowledge of Shakspere in England at the close of the eighteenth century.

It will be evident from what has been already said that the series of the English editions of Shakspere belonging to the eighteenth century had still left much to be done, both for the settlement of the text of his plays, and for the critical appreciation of his poetic characteristics, and of his relations to the historical developement as well as

the formation of his skull. See Klein, *Geschichte des Dramas*, iv. 107, where, it is only fair to state, the authority is appealed to of 'a celebrated English anthropologist,' J. C. Prichard.

[1] How he is cultivated on the one, may be read in Genée's work already quoted, and in the *Jahrbuch*; on the other he is honoured after a fashion, but upon the whole more in the breach than the observance.

[2] See Thimm's *Shakspeariana*.

the true ends and laws of dramatic art. At how low a point, notwithstanding the efforts of both literature and stage, the public knowledge of what Shakspere really was remained, was shown at the close of the century by a most notorious episode in the history of literary impostures. At the end of the year 1795 an 'unthinking and impetuous boy' (to adopt his own subsequent apologetic description of himself) of the name of William Henry Ireland put forth a succession of legal instruments and miscellaneous papers which he ascribed to Shakspere, Queen Elisabeth, the Earl of Southampton, and others. They included a 'Confession of Faith' from the poet, a letter from him to Anne Hathaway (accompanied by a lock of her lover's hair), and—perhaps the most audacious invention of all—a document showing that an Elisabethan W. H. Ireland had saved the poet's life. To these were added a *Kynge Leare* and a portion of *Hamblette*, both professing to be printed from a copy in the handwriting of the poet. It was an age of forgeries; and the example of his predecessors in this line of literary activity had not unnaturally fired the brain of the hopeful youth. In his favour there was the fact that, as Malone observes in his *Inquiry* into the genuineness of these documents, of Shakspere's handwriting there were known not more than eleven letters of the ordinary alphabet, and three capital letters. The orthography might have furnished a surer test; in chronological accuracy it is on a par with Chatterton's pseudo-archaisms. Ireland however succeeded for a time, as all impostors succeed, by dint of effrontery. Most or all of the documents were previously to publication submitted to the inspection of the world of fashion and letters; and many persons testified to their conviction of their genuineness by subscribing a declaration to that effect. Among these were not only Boswell, who fell on his knees in his devout enthusiasm, exclaiming that he 'now kissed the invaluable relics of our bard, and gave thanks to God that he had lived to see them'[1], but also so distinguished

The Ireland forgeries (1795–6).

[1] The authority for this is Ireland himself, in his *Confessions* (2nd edition), p. 96.

a scholar as Dr. Parr. Porson, on the other hand, evaded the invitation, declaring that 'he detested subscriptions of all kinds, but more especially to *articles of faith*.'

But the imposture in chief, which finally burst the bubble, was still to come. In 1796 Ireland's mind was 'taken possession of' by the idea of writing a play, and after counting the number of lines in one of Shakspere's, forming it 'on that standard' (which happened to be an unusually high one). It was completed, and accepted at Drury Lane, then under the management of Sheridan, from whose remark, that 'however high Shakspeare might stand in the estimation of the public in general, he did not for his part regard him as a poet in that exalted light, although he allowed the brilliancy of his ideas, and the penetration of his mind[1],' the author of *Vortigern and Rowena* may have derived considerable encouragement. Its production settled the question, which was already a very open question (for Malone's *Inquiry* was announced), of the character of its author as well as of itself. With the judicious aid of Kemble, who emphasised an unfortunate line—

'And when this solemn mockery is o'er'—

with unmistakeable intention, it was hopelessly damned. Malone hereupon published his famous *Inquiry* into the authenticity of the Ireland MSS., and the question was at an end, though the subject was not yet allowed to rest. Ireland, to vindicate his father from the suspicion of partnership in the forgery, published a pamphlet to avow himself the fabricator; but not all the believers would consent to accept his declaration, and Chalmers, who had been a believer, indulged his spleen against Malone in a lengthy argument, to the effect that 'though the criminal might be guilty, yet the proofs brought by the prosecutor might be defective in their forms, and inconsecutive in their inferences[2].' The full *Confessions* of Ireland, published with a preface of sublime self-consciousness, and dedicated to the

[1] *Confessions*, p. 138.

[2] *Advertisement to Chalmers' Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers* (1799), p. vii.

Prince of Wales, ended the eventful history of this high-aspiring youth.

Their moral.

This episode speaks for itself. With the help of the stage, the public had at last vindicated its instinctive judgment; the critics had either been at fault or had not at once, as behoved them, boldly crushed the impudent fraud. A time was however at hand when Shakspere was to be brought home more thoroughly to the English literary world; and the first and most important services in this direction were fitly rendered by a mind of commanding originality.

New school of English Shakspere-criticism. Coleridge (1811 *et post*).

About the time that Schlegel was lecturing on Shakspere in Germany (1811), Coleridge, the most gifted, the most learned, and the most philosophical member of the new Romantic School of English poets, came forward as a lecturer on Shakspere in London. There is so much in the spirit and manner of his disquisitions resembling those of his German contemporary, and there was something so entirely new to English ears in his whole system of criticism, that it was hardly avoidable that the charge of plagiarism should be brought against him. He spurned this charge with indignant emphasis[1], and he is to be believed on his word. That the influence of the tendencies of the German Romantic School, to which Schlegel gave the first complete and systematic expression, were strong upon Coleridge at this period of his intellectual developement, it would be at the same time idle to deny. The appreciation of Shakspere and the dramatic art perceptible in both these great writers was, as the phrase is, in the air,—in the air, *i.e.*, breathed by those who stood on the height of European culture. Unfortunately, Coleridge's lectures on Shakspere, having never been regularly committed to writing, have never been printed in a form authenticated by his own approval; but enough remains, in Mr. Collier's publication of the transcripts of his own short-hand notes[2], to prove that Coleridge was the first among

[1] See *Notes on Hamlet*, p. 205.

[2] *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton.* By the late S. T. Coleridge. With an Introductory Preface, &c. by J. P. Collier (1856). See also Coleridge's

Englishmen to give to the world an adequate estimate of Shakspere's genius, and to prove his form not less worthy of admiration than his matter, because the one is harmoniously adapted to the other. Herein lies the gist of Coleridge's Shakspere-criticism; and it is based, like Schlegel's, upon the principles first proclaimed by Lessing. Coleridge pointed out[1] 'that the form of Shakspere's dramas was suited to their substance, not less than the form of the Greek dramas to their substance. He pointed out the contrast between mechanical form superinduced from without, and organic form growing from within; he showed that if Shakspere or any other modern were to hold by the Greek writers, he would be imposing on his creations a dead form copied from without, instead of

notes on Shakspere in his *Literary Remains*, which are scattered notes taken by himself or others from the lectures aforesaid.

[1] See Principal Shairp's Essay on Coleridge, *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy* (1868), pp. 201 *seqq*. The last metaphor, in the passage cited, recalls a beautiful passage in the *Winter's Tale*, where Shakspere as it were supplies the champions of his genius with the one apology which its processes require:—

'*Perdita.* Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations, and streak'd gilliflowers
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.
Polixenes. Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?
Perdita. For I have heard it said
There is an art, which in their piedness shares
With great creating nature.
Polixenes. Say there be;
Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean; *so, o'er that art*
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scyon to the wilder stock,
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which doth mend nature, change it rather; but
The art itself is nature.
Perdita. So it is.
Polixenes. Then make your garden rich in gillyflowers,
And do not call them bastards.'

Act. iv. Sc. 4.

letting them shape themselves from within, and clothe themselves with their own natural and living form, as the tree clothes itself with its bark.' Coleridge's lectures, moreover, abound in instances of that almost prophetic power which he possessed of divining deeper meanings and revealing them in a language which is itself the utterance of a poetic inspiration.

The group of English writers among whom Coleridge held so prominent a place were at one with him in their love of Shakspere. To no English writer do we owe so genial a criticism of him, as well as of the other Elisabethan dramatists, as to Charles Lamb[1]. Nor is it possible to pass over either those delightful reminiscences of old actors which permit even a later generation to share some of the delights of a stage on which Shakspere was loved as well as honoured, or those *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), told by Lamb and his sister, to which many a child has owed its first divination of the genius of the humanest of poets.

Charles Lamb (1807 *et post*).

Hazlitt was a critic for the stage, and as such was at times sorely tempted to dwell on the disadvantages as well as the advantages accompanying a study of Shakspere in the theatre, the deplorable conventionalities of which, as he well points out, frequently obscure rather than promote a fresh appreciation of the poet's beauties. His remarks on the *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays* (1817) were an attempt to counteract this evil. His *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820) contain, together with much healthy criticism, some crude conclusions of an intellect too prone to credit itself with infallibility[2]. It was however of no little importance to the study of Shakspere himself, as well as of the dramatic literature of his age in general, that both these writers succeeded to some extent in impressing upon Englishmen the fact that Shakspere, according to Goethe's expression,

Hazlitt (1817 *et post*).

[1] *Essays on the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage Representation; Characters of Dramatic Writers contemporary with Shakespeare; Specimens of Early Dramatic Poetry* (1808).

[2] Thus, *e.g.*, his remarks on the modern German drama are full of absurd prejudice.

Thomas Campbell (1833).

Drake (1817).

'did not stand alone.' Writers of other schools co-operated in the advance of Shakspere-criticism, from Campbell[1], with his pleasant literary touch, to Drake, whose elaborate work on *Shakespeare and his Times* (1817) is still valuable as a repository of sound as well as multifarious learning.

Recent English editions, criticisms, and illustrations of Shakspere.

In adverting, in conclusion, to the labours of more recent scholars, many of whom happily still survive to advance the cause which they have at heart, I must impose upon myself the same restraint which I observed in speaking of the Shakspere-literature of the Germany of our days. In general, it is inevitable that a nation should obey the bent of its genius in critical and illustrative, as well as in original and creative, literature; and thus with certain exceptions (among whom I should like to note Mrs. Jameson, a writer of high artistic cultivation and delicate aesthetic perception[2]) modern English criticism of Shakspere has continued in the main to occupy itself with the material part of the author, with the elucidation and restoration of his text, the explanation and illustration of his matter, and the history of all that surrounds and explains his life and literary career. Individuals such as Mr. J. Payne Collier above all, of whom, all unhappy controversies apart, it is impossible to speak without gratitude, and by his side Mr. J. O. Halliwell, the late Mr. Dyce, the late Mr. Charles Knight, Mr. Joseph Hunter, and many others, have laboured in these directions with a zeal and a success above commendation from a mere student. Such Societies as the Percy and Camden, and above all that which, founded in 1840, upon the whole worthily bore during its unhappily too brief career Shakspere's own name, have by the publication of documents illustrating the times of Shakspere and the history of the stage, of plays and ballads connecting themselves in subject or otherwise with his plays, and of multifarious antiquities and curiosities of Elisabethan and other old English literature, furnished an endless store of new materials. Lastly, the editions of Mr. Singer (1826), of Mr. Charles Knight (the *Pictorial Shakspeare*, 1838), of

[1] *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Shakspeare* in his Edition (1833).

[2] I refer in particular to her *Shakespeare's Female Characters* (1834).



Mr. Collier (1841[1]), of Mr. Halliwell (the folio edition, begun in 1853, of which two-thirds have already appeared), of Mr. Dyce (1857), of Mr. Staunton (1858), and of Messrs. Clark and Wright (the 'Cambridge edition,' 1863), all, or nearly all, possess distinctive merits of their own. In the last named, the results of a careful collation of Shakspere's text from the various editions has been for the first time placed before the reader; and the same editors have, in a series of annotated plays, begun a task the accomplishment of which will go some way to satisfy the needs of those students of Shakspere with whom *multum in parvo* is an indispensable condition. Mr. Abbott's *Shakespeare Grammar* (1869) is a similar right step in another direction[2].

American labours in the same field.

Meanwhile both the aesthetic and general criticism of Shakspere, and a careful study of his language, have met with zealous and successful cultivation on the other side of the Atlantic. In the latter department, the attention paid in America to English philology has been of great advantage to the study of Shakspere as of other English classics. In the former, high praise has been given to Richard Grant White's *Life and Genius of Shakespeare* (Boston, 1865). The chief merits of this book seem to me the freshness and vivacity of its criticism, while the biographical part is valuable as clear-

[1] The edition of 1853 contained the famous emendations of the MS. annotator, which gave rise to so bitter and in its results unsatisfactory a controversy.

[2] While I am preparing these pages for the press, information reaches me of the foundation of a *New Shakspere Society*, which will I trust be in full activity by the time these volumes appear before the public. Its director, Mr. F. J. Furnivall, and the workers whom he has associated with him in the management of the new Society, are the last men to desire to be judged by their 'good intentions,' and several of them have already given proof of their capacity for the task which they have undertaken. But what gives ground for the best hopes in connexion with their labours is the circumstance—clearly demonstrated by the prospectus of the Society—that they intend to begin at the right end; and in the first instance to set about determining the chronology of Shakspere's plays,—the true basis of all sound criticism of his poetical developement,—principally by means of those tests of versification which when judicially applied are, if not absolute, at least supreme in value. They promise much other useful work; and altogether it is long since so hopeful a movement has been originated in connexion with the study of our dramatic literature in general, and of Shakspere in particular. Some of the earliest papers of the new Society's *Transactions* I have, by the kindness of Mr. Furnivall, been enabled to use for parts of this book.

ing away many more than doubtful 'documentary' accumulations. In the extraordinary essay of Miss Bacon (first pointed out to the English public in the lamented N. Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*), which is by no means to be classed among the chronic vagaries proving Shakspere to have been this or that or the other, I think few who have had an opportunity of reading it at length will fail to discern the gleam of historical truth at the bottom of a conception which its authoress cherished till she misunderstood her own meaning. Many other essays of a more sober cast might be named, were it necessary to prove that the love of Shakspere, to which Washington Irving in his delightful *Sketch-book* bore witness with even more than his usual exquisite grace, is warm in the breasts of our American kinsmen as in our own. Stratford has become a kind of American Mecca; but this is the least of the proofs of the fact in question [1].

Shakspere on the modern English stage.

Shakspere, then, can never again be lost to England, to English-speaking nations, to the Germanic, to the civilised world. But in his own country he will never command that full and broad popularity which is his due; he will never come home as the great master of form as well as of matter to the consciousness of the nation at large, until he, and his fellow-dramatists by his side, are once more in possession of their own most proper domain, the stage. After Garrick's withdrawal his fame was sustained there by a succession of actors different from their great predecessor in some respects, resembling him in their devotion to what was great in their art, and in their love for the greatest master of the drama. John and Charles Kemble and their great sister, Mrs. Siddons, if of a school less adapted to give expression to the variety of Shakspere's genius, at least nobly made manifest the significance of some of his grandest and loftiest creations. The elder Kean, imperfectly trained and following no impulse but that of his own instinct, illuminated with vivid flashes of true genius—so it seems from our accounts of him—many

[1] An edition of Shakspere has quite recently been published, with an Introductory volume, by Mr. H. N. Hudson; and Mr. Furness has begun, and will it may be hoped live to complete, the *magnum opus* of a new *Variorum* edition.

of the most remarkable figures in Shakspere's gallery of humanity. After them the tradition of great acting was handed down by a few worthy successors; nor is the stage even at this day wholly devoid of representatives of a better past. But the age has passed when, in the words of a critic whose experience of the English stage is equalled by his knowledge of our dramatic literature, 'it was as legitimate to profess admiration of Shakspere and Jonson, as now of Rossini and Donizetti[1].' When Shakspere is now acted, unless his plays are hastily presented for the glorification of some one particular artist, they are usually said to be 'revived,' which means that they are buried alive beneath an accumulation of more or less idle paraphernalia. If they are produced with a show nearly equalling in splendour of pageantry that of a Christmas pantomime, they are approved by a public which then lays the flattering unction to its soul that it has not yet lost its taste for the higher drama. Until these things change, a gap will remain in the evidence of our nation's love for Shakspere; and his countrymen will continue to be debarred from studying him where he is after all best studied, because studied under the conditions for which he designed his works,—on the stage.

Biographical data.

The following is by no means intended as an attempt to review, in however summary a form, what has been written on the personal life of Shakspere. It is, on the contrary, nothing but an endeavour to detach from the elaborate accumulations of learning and the rude heap of tradition the more significant facts actually ascertained in connexion with the subject[2].

[1] W. B. Donne, *Essays on the Drama*, p. 160.

[2] Among the more recent English biographies of Shakspere are those of Mr. Collier (in vol. i. of his edition of the *Works of Shakespeare*, 1841), of Mr. Halliwell (*The Life of William Shakespeare*, 1848), and of Mr. Dyce (in vol. i. of his edition of the *Works*, 1857). In some cases however it will be necessary to refer to later works, such as that of Mr. Grant White. Discredited documents I have generally preferred to pass by in silence. Besides these, the researches of Mr. G. Russell French (*Shakspeareana Genealogica*, 1869) and the labours of Charles Knight (*William Shakspere, a Biography*, 1843) and Joseph Hunter (*New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakspeare*, 1845), and among earlier writers of Malone and Drake, will occasionally

The spelling of Shakspere's name.

A word may, in the first instance, seem necessary as to the spelling of the poet's name. If there be good reason to presume that the surname in question was borne by persons of the same lineage only [1], the difference is of a purely orthographical character. Not less than fifty-five various ways of spelling the name are stated to exist, to which should perhaps be added a fifty-sixth, *Shakespheare*[2]. Of these varieties there is sufficient reason to conclude the earliest (1278) to be *Shakespere*. The poet's own signature has been examined in six autographs, of which however one is of disputed genuineness [3]. The spelling in this last case is *Shakspere*. Of the three signatures of the will the first appears to be generally accepted as *Shakspere;* about the second and third, which are more tremulously written, there is divergence of opinion; but according to my judgment (and one can but follow one's eyes [4]), there seems no difficulty in adopting Malone's final opinion, which agrees with that of Madden and Boaden, and accepting them also as *Shakspere*. The same conclusion seems to follow from an examination of the signature to the indenture of 1613 [5]. On the evidence of these four, or five, signatures (and another autograph, held to be genuine, in the possession of Mr. H. S. Hawkins, is said to favour the same conclusion) it is difficult to doubt what was the poet's own *usual* signature. Whether, as has been argued by the eminent grammarian Professor Koch, this spelling likewise best agrees with

prove of use. Mr. Halliwell's kindness enables me to avail myself of the new facts communicated in the advanced instalment of his eagerly expected *Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare* (1874).

[1] This was pointed out by Hunter. The owners of the name in old deeds are stated with few exceptions to have the Christian names of John, Thomas, William, or Richard.

[2] The name is so spelt in a MS. prose tract (*The Excellency of the English Tongue*, 1590, already printed in Camden's *Remains*) stated to have been recently discovered by Mr. Scott of the British Museum. See some of the varieties in Grant White, *Memoirs*, p. 6, *note*.

[3] Viz., that in the copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne. It is accepted by Sir F. Madden, but doubted by Mr. Halliwell.

[4] I judge from the facsimiles in Malone's *Inquiry*. All the signatures have, I find, been photo-lithographed in Staunton's *Memorials of Shakespeare*.

[5] The mortgage deed of the Blackfriars property containing the fifth signature has been mislaid or lost.

the historical progress of English orthoëpy and orthography, seems of less importance, inasmuch as varieties in the spelling of the name undoubtedly occurred before the poet's time.

On the other hand, nearly all the quartos bearing the poet's name and published in his lifetime have the spelling *Shakespeare*, with one exception, and this has *Shakspeare*. The editions of his poems put forth by the poet himself have the former spelling, which was also adopted by Heminge and Condell, and after them by the editors of the subsequent folios. That in the London world the first syllable was pronounced long, seems to be proved by the numerous puns on the word *Shake* already noticed. The drafts of the grant of arms of 1596 and 1599 give respectively *Shakespeare* and *Shakespere;* the text of the indenture of 1613 has *Shakespeare*.

The form 'Shakspere' vindicated.

I can only arrive at the result that in London the name was pronounced differently from the Stratford usage, and spelt accordingly, but that Shakspere followed the local custom, at least as an ordinary habit. Nothing is more probable than that, like so many of his contemporaries, he may have varied in his own spelling of his own name, but there is no proof of such a fact in his case. As it is therefore to be assumed that he preferred the local usage, according to his wont keeping Warwickshire in mind, I see no reason to defer to the choice of printers, or even to the desire of his brother-poets to find materials in his name for a kindly pun. For this simple reason, and because nothing is ever gained by the adoption of an arbitrary orthography, I have written his name throughout this book as *Shakspere*, notwithstanding the usage to the contrary, sanctioned as it is by the authority of both the English and the German *Shakespeare* Societies. The question is of small importance; but it seemed fitting to assign my reason for diverging from what has become the usual practice[1].

[1] Among English Shakspere-scholars of recent date Mr. Chas. Knight I think alone writes *Shakspere*. For the most recent learning on the subject see K. Elze, *Die Schreibung des Namens Shakespeare*, in *Jahruch*, vol. v. (1870). His argument, though resulting in an opposite conclusion, has rather confirmed me in my view. The new *Shakspere Society* furnishes me with a timely encouragement by sanctioning the spelling which I have adopted.

Distinction between useless and useful illustrations of Shakspere's life.

In seeking to recall what is actually known of Shakspere's personal life, there are two kinds of information which ought above all to be scrupulously left aside. The former of these is the useless—I mean of course the relatively useless—and the latter is the apocryphal. The uselessness of antiquarian details is always relative, a fact which at the same time justifies every kind of antiquarian enquiry, however barren it may seem in its immediate results. To take an example. It may appear of scant importance to pursue through its whole course the history of the Arden family, into which John Shakspere, the poet's father, married. The lineage of Shakspere's mother may seem to have a very indirect bearing upon his personal life. Yet when it is remembered that these Ardens were one of the leading families of Warwickshire, that they took part in one of the Catholic plots preceding the Babington conspiracy, that like many Catholic families of that period they kept a priest in disguise attached to their service, and that the head of the family, Edward Arden of Park Hall, was hanged at Tyburn in October 1583, while another connexion of the house strangled himself in his prison-cell[1], the interest, and the significant interest, attaching to the history of a line whose blood ran in the veins of the poet himself, will be recognised at once. In Warwickshire, religious party-feeling must in those days, as in later times, have run at least as high as in any other part of England. If the Ardens were among the martyrs of Catholic discontent, another Warwickshire gentleman, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, an estate certainly close to the poet's birthplace, distinguished himself in 1585, when Parry was awaiting his sentence for an attempt to assassinate Queen Elisabeth, by moving in the House of Commons that 'some new law should be devised for Parry's execution such as might be thought fittest for his extraordinary and horrible treason[2],'—*i. e.* Sir Thomas Lucy belonged to the extreme and demonstrative Protestant party of the time.

[1] All these facts will be found in Froude's *History of England, &c.*, vol. pp. 609–11.

[2] See Froude, *ib.*, vol. xii. p. 67.

Now, the existence thus apparent of such extremes in the localities of Shakspere's birth and youth is of high significance,—not as throwing any light on the utterly futile question whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant[1], but as a foil to the fact that in this poet, Warwickshire-born and bred beyond all doubt, there are discoverable no traces of the religious intolerance which distracted his native county; from which the conclusion is clear, that in this respect too the tendency of his mind was to rise above or reconcile such differences, unlike even a Spenser, who at least contributed to embitter religious partisanship.

With regard then to ascertained facts of this description, indirectly connected with Shakspere's personal life, everything depends on the application; in a work on Shakspere and his times they accordingly find a fitting place, if their bearing is made clear, and if the unity of the picture is not destroyed by the overcrowding of the canvas. But this is not the place to attempt so ambitious a task.

Apocryphal traditions relegated to fiction.

With regard to merely apocryphal anecdotes, such as have most appropriately aided Walter Savage Landor or Ludwig Tieck in building up their charming poetic fancies, it is only necessary to remember that they are apocryphal in order to discard them from consideration as materials for a historical sketch. Of such a story as that of the deer-stealing it is therefore unnecessary to take notice. Even if there be no conclusive force in Malone's discovery that it must be false, because Sir Thomas Lucy had no park (from which it seems by no means to follow that he had no deer), the fact remains that there is no authority for it older than Rowe's, borne out by the second-hand statement of Oldys that he had seen or heard of an old

[1] Futile, because, as all his children were baptised at the parish church in Stratford, there can at least be no reason to doubt which faith he *professed*. Yet while pamphlets have been written to prove Shakspere a Christian and others to prove him an atheist, various attempts have been made to prove him a Catholic. Perhaps the most elaborate of these, by the French author A. F. Rio, is examined at length by M. Bernays in *Jahrbuch*, vol. i. (1865). Another, in English, appeared in a journal, *The Rambler* (1854); but the idea is by no means new. Already Davies, who died in 1708, noted as a fact (in his additions to Fulman's MS. collections) that Shakspere 'dyed a papist.'

gentleman (who died in 1730) who preserved the same tradition on the authority of some old folk at Stratford. That Shakspere bore a grudge against Sir Thomas Lucy seems indeed clear from the well-known passage in the *Merry Wives*[1]; that there is a stanza of a ballad *attributed* to Shakspere (in which however no mention is made of the deer-stealing) will not be disputed; and Mr. Halliwell may have good reason for concluding that deer-stealing was neither uncommon nor disgraceful in Shakspere's days. But all this is of course worth nothing as evidence. So again, the fancy that Shakspere in his youth was present at Queen Elisabeth's merry-makings at Kenilworth may or may not rest on fact. There is nothing to connect Shakspere with this visit, except the undoubted possibility of such an occurrence, together with the *supposed* reference to these entertainments in a passage of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*[2]. Even assuming the reference to be indisputable, it has been well pointed out by Mr. Collier that it is quite unnecessary to explain Shakspere's knowledge of the details as a personal reminiscence, inasmuch as a full account of the Kenilworth entertainments had been published in 1576 by Gascoigne, and a letter on the same subject had been printed by one of Leicester's players in the previous year. Yet on this possibility an ingenious theory has been constructed, according to which Shakspere attended at Kenilworth in the train of his kinsman Arden. Arden—why not?—discovered Leicester's secret marriage, the source of so much bitterness; and the death of Arden was the consequence of this untoward discovery, and impressed the whole episode (as it undoubtedly would have done) indelibly on Shakspere's mind[3].

These are instances of a species of extra- (perhaps supra-) historical biography which has its charms, and, as an exercise of ingenuity or fancy, may have its uses. They must suffice; in the following I confine myself to facts.

[1] Act i. sc. 1. [2] Act ii. sc. 1.

[3] Halpin, *Oberon's Vision, &c.* See the note on *Midsummer Night's Dream* below.



Shakspere's father,

The name of Shakspere occurs in Warwickshire in the fourteenth, and more frequently in the fifteenth, century; but there is no evidence of any member of the family having been connected with Stratford-on-Avon before the poet's father, John Shakspere, who was certainly settled there by the year 1552. Presumably the son of a farmer, he undoubtedly in Stratford followed the trade of a 'glover;' and it may be concluded with safety that in the earliest years of his son's life he prospered; for he was elected an alderman of Stratford in 1565, and was bailiff from 1568 to 1569. As such he was by virtue of his office a magistrate. In 1596 he, or very likely his son on his behalf, applied for a *confirmation* of a grant of arms, which was then drafted; of the original grant, if it was ever made, no evidence exists. In 1599 he obtained an 'exemplification' of the arms, which was possibly the first grant actually made. Some time before this his affairs had taken an untoward turn; and in 1586 and 1587 he was certainly in pecuniary difficulties. As his trade of a glover is never mentioned after 1556, and as he is called a 'yeoman' in 1578 and 1579, he had probably exchanged commercial for agricultural pursuits. He died in 1601.

and mother.

In 1577, or thereabouts, John Shakspere married Mary the seventh and youngest daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmecote. There seems no doubt that this Arden was a lineal descendant of the ancient family of that name which traced its descent to Ælwyn 'Vice-Comes of Warwickshire under his uncle Leofric' in the time of Edward the Confessor, and through him seems further traceable to Guy of Warwick, with a possible female descent from Alfred the Great himself! In any case Robert Arden, whose will is preserved, was a gentleman and a landowner, and to his daughter Mary he left a farm of considerable value. She died in 1608.

Date of his birth.

William Shakspere was the third—possibly the fourth—child of a family which seems to have numbered ten children. He was baptised at Stratford on April 26, 1564; the day of his birth (said to be the 23rd, the same as that of his death) is merely traditional, and has probably been

adopted because it is agreeable to popular imagination to connect the national poet with the national saint.

His recollections of Warwickshire probably in part traceable to his childhood.

Of his childhood and early youth we know nothing in the way of facts. In the way of conjectures we have one that is indisputable, and many that are plausible. The indisputable one is that he kept his eyes and ears wide open, and that the knowledge which was to develope into a knowledge of his kind began at home. Shakspere's works abound in reminiscences of his native county, in which it is pleasing to suspect the enduring recollections of childhood. Warwickshire names and allusions to Warwickshire scenery appear to be of frequent occurrence in his plays[1]. He had no doubt repeated opportunities of refreshing such memories in later life; but they may fairly be deemed, in part at least, to attest the early growth of a power of observation which is always, where it exists, to some extent the product of early habit.

Probable conclusions as to his education.

Among the plausible conjectures is this: that Shakspere was a pupil of the Free Grammar School of his native town. The supposition rests, not so much upon a tradition mentioned by Rowe, founded on information collected on the spot by Betterton, as on the fact that Shakspere, as is evident from his works, must have been educated somewhere, and could hardly have been educated elsewhere. If so, he learnt Latin, and thus obtained the rudiments of the ordinary classical education of his day, which enabled him to hold his own against the majority of his fellow-writers in the matter of classical knowledge, though never given to that show of classical learning which many of them were so anxious to make. The often-quoted and often-misunderstood remark of Ben Jonson,

'Though thou hadst small Latine and lesse Greeke[2],'

proves, not that Shakspere had never learnt either of these languages, but that he had not kept up a proficiency in

[1] See French, *u. s.* p. 313.

[2] W. Towers, in some commendatory verses to Cartwright's Comedies in 1657, referring to this remark, changes it to 'little Latin and no Greek,' probably a still more correct summary of such a classical education as Shakspere could have received. Halliwell, p. 91.



them, or at all events was careless about displaying it after the fashion of Ben Jonson himself, and of many of the other dramatists. This vexed 'question' as to Shakspere's classical attainments is in reality not worth discussing. Shakspere could not, it is said, have been a classical scholar, he could not have had a classical training, or he would not have read Plutarch in a translation. In the first place, as Mr. Dyce observes, he might, even with competent scholarship, be excused for preferring a translation to the original; in the second place, if he was unable to read the latter, how many of those educated in our own day at grammar-schools and colleges possess in after-life a greater degree of familiarity with the text-books of their old studies, unless they have chanced to pursue these for special reasons? Shakspere, it is clear, retained through life as much knowledge of Latin as is ordinarily retained by those who have in their youth learnt something of that tongue as a matter of course, but who have not afterwards made it a special study. Greek he had probably never learnt at school, and there is no proof, as there is no probability, that he ever learnt it afterwards. A common-sense view of this subject appears quite sufficient to lead to a natural and satisfactory conclusion. What he acquired of French and Italian, possibly of German, whether it was much or little,—and I see no reason to adopt the former conclusion,—was assuredly not the result of his education; there is no evidence that his knowledge of books or plays in any one of these languages was obtained at first-hand; but even if there were such evidence, it would not amount to showing that he had learnt any foreign tongue after a fashion in any sense regular or complete.

His probable early acquaintance with the stage.

We may then assume Shakspere to have been a pupil of the Stratford Grammar School, without dwelling on the loss of the desk consecrated by believing minds to the memory of his unknown pedagogue, or insinuating a reflexion on that ghostly being's character by means of a quotation from *Twelfth Night*[1]. Another species of edu-

[1] Mr. Halliwell would be 'almost inclined to admit the possibility of a sly notice of Shakspere's schoolmaster in the description of Malvolio as most vil-

cation Shakspere may have at the same time received; for there can be no doubt that companies of actors visited Stratford in 1569, and again in 1573 and 1576, after which date they constantly reappeared there. And as 1569 was the year of the bailiffship of Shakspere's father, whose permission the actors must therefore have obtained for their exhibitions, there can have been no Puritan paternal influence to restrain the boy from following the natural bent of youthful curiosity, or to make him seek to indulge it in secret, like young Wolfgang Goethe at Frankfort.

More or less ingenious speculations as to his occupation after leaving school.

From a period in Shakspere's life easily filled with the help of allowable conjecture we pass to one in which the imaginative ingenuity of amateur biographers finds a free field for its bewildering license. In the first place it is assumed, I do not know on what grounds, that Shakspere, on leaving school, engaged in some regular occupation. The 'sign of a profession' must therefore be stamped upon him at once. What more likely (this 'follows well') than that he was associated in some way with his father's business? There is indeed considerable doubt as to what his father's business was at this time. But it is only necessary to assume the elder Shakspere to have been a wool-stapler in order to see a direct reminiscence of a technicality of this profession in a passage in *Hamlet*[1]. On the other hand, if his father was a butcher, is there not much to be said for Aubrey's anecdote that Shakspere occasionally 'killed a calf' in the way of business? Or, as his father had probably at this time resumed farming, this was the time when Shakspere gained the experience of a 'practical farmer' of which his works furnish proofs in such abundance[2]. Again, the family difficulties may have driven the eldest

lainously cross-gartered "like a pedant that keeps school i' the church,"'—were he not prepared not to do so. The chapel of the guild at Stratford was used as a school probably only temporarily.

[1] 'There's a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we may' (v. 2);

the origin of which phrase Dr. Farmer brought home to the ordinary practice in the making of wool-skewers.

[2] This is stated to be the tendency of Mr. Roach Smith's *Rural Life of Shakspere, as illustrated by his Works* (1870).

son to seek to support himself by exertions of his own. Aubrey, who heard so much, had also heard that Shakspere found employment as usher of the Grammar School. Is it not however more probable, in view of the evidence of knowledge of the forms of the law exhibited in his works, that he bound himself apprentice to a lawyer[1]? Yet, again, he must at some time have obtained the knowledge of surgery which his works reveal—and was not this the most likely time[2]? And if Shakspere was ever a soldier—which can hardly be doubted—was not this the most likely season for him to have sought the experience of military service[3]?

His marriage (1582).

Certain it is that whether or in what way soever Shakspere, when on the threshold of manhood, was seeking to obtain the means of supporting life, he adopted the surest means of increasing the difficulties of the attempt by entering, at the early age of eighteen (towards the close of the year 1582), into what it seems hardly unwarranted to term a rash marriage. This marriage appears to have taken place not at Stratford itself, but in some other parish of the diocese of Worcester. The bond entered into on this occasion by two inhabitants of Stratford, which made a single publication of the bans sufficient, has been thought to indicate haste in the transaction; on the other hand,

[1] The late Lord Campbell's speculations on the origin of Shakspere's knowledge of legal technicalities are well known. The supposition that Shakspere spent some time in an attorney's office is however also favoured by the authority of Mr. Collier, *Life*, p. lxxxiv.

[2] His works are stated to have been subjected to a medico-chirurgical commentary by W. Wadd in the *Quarterly Journal of Science of the Royal Institution* (1829). There is some humour in a remark with which I have somewhere met, that *Titus Andronicus* (regarded as Shakspere's earliest play) savours as much of the profession which he had just left as Schiller's *Robbers* (written when its author was actually a military surgeon).

[3] W. J. Thoms, *Was Shakespeare ever a Soldier?* (1865). All these and other similar enquiries have been amusingly brought together by Mr. W. Blades in his *Shakspere and Typography* (1872), where he humorously adds one more hypothesis of his own, the nature of which may be gathered from the title of his pamphlet. Cf. also some of French's *Appendices*. Mr. Grant White, *Memoirs*, p. 45, *note*, amuses himself with a humorous demonstration that Shakspere was a tailor. But he seriously inclines to the belief that Shakspere was apprenticed to the law, pp. 67–77.

such bonds are affirmed to have been of frequent occurrence.

His wife.

I have called the marriage a rash one, because the epithet is assuredly applicable to any union contracted between a boy of eighteen and a woman of twenty-five or twenty-six—for that this was Anne Hathaway's age at the time of her marriage appears from her epitaph in Stratford Church. According to the information obtained by Rowe, she was the daughter of 'a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford;' and it has been sought to identify Shakspere's father-in-law with one Richard Hathaway of Shottery. A Richard Hathaway, who is mentioned as a dramatist contemporary with Shakspere, may have been his brother-in-law.

How far the marriage was productive of happiness, or of the reverse, is however quite uncertain[1]. As nothing is known of Shakspere's wooing[2], so neither is there any evidence of a conclusive character as to the general course of his wedded life. It is, however, well known that towards the close of his life he was not desirous of taking the opportunity of drawing up his will in order to give public expression to any feelings of exceptional warmth towards her. He bequeathed to her his second-best bed; her dower being of course secured to her by law. She died seven years after her husband, and according to a tradition, communicated by the clerk of the church in 1693, desired (as did his daughters) to be laid in the same grave with him.

His children.

The issue of this marriage was three children, the eldest of whom, Susanna, was born in May 1583. The two

[1] Mr. Collier, supported by the opinion of Coleridge, considers a personal reference traceable in the passage in *Twelfth Night* (ii. 4):

'Let still the woman take
An elder than herself,' &c.

See also Grant White, p. 53.

[2] Garrick bought relics of the Hathaway cottage at Shottery, which is lovingly described by Mr. Charles Knight, p. 265, and by Mr. Halliwell, whose efforts have I believe ensured its preservation. Mr. G. Massey, in his book on Shakspere's Sonnets, intimates his opinion that *The Lover's Complaint* has reference to Shakspere's courtship, and that he in this poem alludes to the early troubles of himself and his wife.



younger, twins, were baptised, under the names of Hamnet and Judith, at Stratford on February 2, 1585. Susanna afterwards married a physician of the name of Hall[1]; and her last descendant died in 1669. Hamnet (or, as the name was sometimes spelt, Hamlet) died in his boyhood, in 1596[2]. Judith, who in 1616 married one Thomas Quincy, died in 1661; the last of her children in 1638, without issue. No descendants of the poet can accordingly have been in existence since 1661; though representatives of the line of his only married sister Joan Hart were lately, or still are, living[3].

His first connexion with the London stage.

When and why Shakspere quitted his native town, and repaired to London, cannot be ascertained. By a document quite recently discovered by Mr. Halliwell, it has at last been incontrovertibly established that he owed his first admission to the Blackfriars company to the Burbadges. In this document[4] (which is a supplication to the Lord Chamberlain from Cuthbert Burbadge and the widow of his brother Richard, and bears date 1635) their father James Burbadge, who founded the fortunes of the family and 'was the first builder of playhowses,' is stated to have purchased the Blackfriars property 'at extreame rates, and made it into a playhouse with great charge and troble;' whereupon it was 'leased out to one Evans that first sett up the boyes commonly called the Queenes Majesties

[1] Her epitaph has given rise to a strange conclusion as to Shakspere's reputation in his native town, which I do not notice, as I agree with Mr. Dyce that it is quite unwarranted by the evidence in question.

[2] Allusions to this child have been sought in several of Shakspere's plays, as well as in the name of the tragedy of *Hamlet*—obviously a pure coincidence—viz. in the character of Arthur in *King John*, in that of Edward Prince of Wales in *Richard III*, in that of Prince Mamillius in the *Winter's Tale*, and in other plays. Collier notes that there was an actor of the name of Hamnet in one of the London companies at a subsequent date, who may (like many of the players) have come from Warwickshire. Hamnet and Judith Shakspere were doubtless named after their father's friends Hamnet (or Hamlet) and his wife Judith Sadler. See French, *u. s.* p. 378, where many instances are given of the use of Hamlet as a baptismal appellation down to the seventeenth century.

[3] See French, *u. s.* p. 383 *seqq.*

[4] Printed in *A Fragment of Mr. J. O. Halliwell's Illustrations of Shakespeare* (1874).

children of the Chappell. In processe of time .... the boyes dayly wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves, and soe purchased the lease remaining from Evans with our money and placed men players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspeare, &c.' It does not appear whether Shakspere or his future editors were admitted 'housekeepers,' or merely enjoyed their share of the actors' profits[1], before the company was, as will be seen below, without wholly abandoning the Blackfriars, transferred to the Globe. This is all the trustworthy information we possess as to the earlier part of Shakspere's theatrical career; and we remain without knowledge as to the date of its commencement. Now, James Burbadge was probably a native of Warwickshire[2]; and Heminge's name was likewise not uncommon in that county, and occurs at Stratford itself. A succession of players visited that town in 1579–1583, and again in 1586 and 1587; not less than five companies being mentioned as rewarded there in the year 1587 only.

Period in which he removed to London.

Under these circumstances, it can hardly be doubted what was the nature of the attraction which drew Shakspere from Stratford to London, and what was the period in which he followed it. He can hardly have left Stratford before the birth of his children Hamnet and Judith in 1585. By 1592, at all events, he was well known as a most successful dramatist. Somewhere in the period between

[1] According to another of the papers printed by Mr. Halliwell, the 'housekeepers' took half of the gross profits 'excepting the outer dores, and such of the sayd houskeepers as bee actors doe likewise equally share with all the rest of the actors both in th' other moiety, and in the sayd outer dores also.' The actors took the other half, after there had been defrayed out of it all wages to 'hired men, apparell, poetes, lightes and other charges of the house whatsoever.' (The poets' wages are in a document of 1639, also printed by Mr. Halliwell, stated to be 10s. a week.) The above statements refer to the year 1635, but probably represent an established practice.

[2] See Collier's Memoirs of Richard Burbadge and of John Heminge in *Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1846). James Burbadge, the father of Richard, held the first place in Lord Leicester's company in 1574, the year before that in which Queen Elisabeth was entertained at Kenilworth. The Blackfriars theatre was opened in 1576 or thereabouts. Richard Burbadge was on the stage before 1588, and probably slightly junior in age to Shakspere.

these dates, and, if time is to be allowed for his acquiring the first experience of his profession, some years before the later of them, must have been the time when he began his professional career[1].

Tradition, or perhaps in this case invention, has busied itself with the beginnings of Shakspere's London life. Dismissing these idle tales, we may leave open to conjecture the question, interesting could it be solved, whether Shakspere had made his first efforts as a writer of plays before he became an actor. He may of course have written plays before he left Stratford. It is however more than probable that in London he from the first combined the exercise of the player's profession with the more incidental labours of a playwright, till the latter came gradually to be his main occupation. In a passage already quoted from Chettle's *Kind Hart's Dreme* (1593) he is praised as excellent in the 'quality he professes,' an expression which seems here, both from the context and from its use in other passages, to refer strictly to the actor's art[2]. And Greene had previously spoken in derision of his 'player's hide[3].' He therefore early attained both to notoriety and to eminence as an actor. A contemporary, John Davies[4], says that Shakspere played 'kingly parts in sport.' His name is preserved as one of the 'principal Tragedians' who acted

Shakspere as an actor.

[1] When Lord Leicester was in the Netherlands in 1585, he was accompanied by a certain 'Will,' designated as a 'jesting player.' The conclusion is of course obvious; and the fact that a John Arden and a Thomas Ardern accompanied Leicester, removes all remnants of doubt, But see Bruce, *Who was Will, &c.*, in *Shakesp. Soc. Papers*, vol. i. The whole question of Shakspere's 'conjectural' travels has been discussed by K. Elze in *Jahrbuch*, vol. viii. 1873. This writer, whose essays are so far as I know generally characterised by calmness as well as learning, regards the hypothesis of Shakspere's having been in Italy as reasonable; but thinks it took place, as Knight also supposes, as late as 1593. The supposition of a journey to Scotland, on the other hand, he is inclined to reject. (I rejoice to learn that there is a probability of an English translation of some of Elze's Essays.)

[2] Cf. *ante*, p. 275, *note* 1. This is pointed out in the paper cited in the following note.

[3] H. Kurz, *Shakespeare, der Schauspieler*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi (1871), concludes from this that Shakspere acted the part of the Duke of York in the Second and Third Parts of *Henry VI.*

[4] In his *Scourge of Folly.*

in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, and again as one of the 'principal Comœdians' who acted in the same author's *Every Man in his Humour*. The statement that he acted the Ghost in *Hamlet* rests on the authority of Rowe; but as Rowe probably had it from Betterton, we may here assume a trustworthy theatrical tradition. On the other hand, no credit need be attached to the legend that a brother, or according to another account a cousin, of Shakspere saw him act in London a character easily identifiable with that of old Adam in *As You Like It*.

The ordinary assumption that Shakspere was a mediocre, if not a bad, actor, wholly lacks proof. In 1680 Aubrey recorded that he 'did act exceedingly well;' and the statements of the author of the *Historia Histrionica* (1699) that he 'was a much better poet than player,' and of Rowe (1709) that he distinguished himself 'if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer,' whatever value they may possess, cannot be said to contradict the supposition, that as an actor, if he was not ranked among the foremost of the profession, he yet held his own. In any case there remains the famous passage in *Hamlet* to prove that he had critically mastered the actor's art; and this is quite sufficient to account for the influence of his experience upon his creative power as a dramatist.

His beginnings as a dramatic writer.

Of a very different significance is the question as to the order of succession in Shakspere's progress as a writer for the stage. The evidence as to the chronology of his several plays I shall attempt to review below; and the uncertainty as to the dates of the earlier among them will then become sufficiently apparent. It is difficult not to believe that beginning with adaptations he gradually passed to original composition; and the references to his labours already noticed agree with this supposition. To say nothing at present of works as to his authorship of, or share in, which we have nothing but conjecture or wholly apocryphal evidence, it may be remarked that of the works which were ascribed to him by the editors of the First Folio those which on internal evidence belong to an early period in his career as an author may be described as

standing midway between adaptation and original composition. Such are *Titus Andronicus* and the three Parts of *Henry VI.* *Pericles*, afterwards included among his works, was mentioned by Dryden, doubtless on the authority of tradition only, as Shakspere's first play[1]. His earliest works to which the epithet original may be more decisively given would thus be comedies; and this again would tally with the conjecture that Spenser, in or before 1591, alludes to Shakspere as a servant of Thalia.

In whatever degree the fortunes of the playhouse with which Shakspere was associated had by that time advanced, in 1593 a temporary cessation of its performances occurred, all the theatres being shut by royal order on account of the prevalence of the plague. It seems extremely probable that Shakspere availed himself of the leisure thus obtained to publish his *Venus and Adonis*, which appeared in the spring of that year, and reached a second edition in 1594, when the *Rape of Lucrece* was also published.

His Venus and Adonis (1593), and Lucrece (1594).

Both these poems were dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (born in 1573[2]); but the terms in which he is addressed in the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* imply that the Earl's permission had not been asked beforehand, so that he was probably not personally known to Shakspere. On the other hand, the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* is couched in terms indicating a close relation of patronage. It was beyond all doubt these poems which gave Shakspere a standing in what was regarded as the literary world; which caused his name to be mentioned with praise by authors who pass by his plays without notice[3]; and which led to his *Sonnets* (not published till 1609) being handed about privately for the delectation of his patrons, as is mentioned by Meres in 1598. If by 'W. H.,' to whom the first edition of these *Sonnets* was inscribed, be signified, as many think, William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, this nobleman, to whom allusions have

Private circulation of his Sonnets.

[1] See Prologue to Charles D'Avenant's *Circe* (1677).
[2] For a memoir of Southampton, see Malone, vol. xx.
[3] So Richard Barnfield in his *Encomion of Lady Pecunia.*

been sought in other of Shakspere's works, was one of his chief patrons[1]. Whether or not some at least of the *Sonnets*, as well as *Venus and Adonis* (which its author describes as 'the first heir of his invention') and perhaps *Lucrece*, were the fruit of his earlier years, and composed before he left Stratford for London, can only be decided by internal evidence.

Tradition of Southampton's gift.

According to a tradition derived by Rowe from the authority of D'Avenant, Shakspere received 'at one time' from the Earl of Southampton a gift of £1,000 'to enable him to go through with a purchase which he had a mind to.' Beyond all doubt the sum must have been enormously exaggerated; but the fact of the gift seems probable enough. It has been conjectured that it was made in return for the dedication of *Venus and Adonis*, and that the 'purchase' in question was Shakspere's contribution to the cost of the Globe Theatre, built by the sons of James Burbadge, some time after their father's death, which occurred about 1594. (From this time the Lord Chamberlain's company, to which Shakspere belonged, performed at the Globe in the summer, and at the smaller (and covered) Blackfriars in the winter, though till 1596 they still occasionally acted at Newington Butts.) In one of the documents recently brought to light by Mr. Halliwell, however, Cuthbert Burbadge and his brother Richard's representative state that they (*i.e.* the brothers) built the Globe at a heavy expense, and that to themselves they 'joyned those deserving men, Shakspere, Heminge, Condall, Philips, and others, partners in the profittes of that they call the House.' The agreement is stated to have been made for twenty-one years; but of the number of shares we know nothing. The *new* Globe, after the fire of 1613, was divided into sixteen shares; and of these

Shakspere and the Globe Theatre (1594 or *post*).

[1] The question of the significance of the *Sonnets* cannot be discussed here; nor need I refer to the voluminous literature of the subject, except to ask the reader's attention to an interesting recent contribution to it, from the hand of an enthusiastic student of Shakspere, whose circumstances, as stated to me by himself, deserve the sympathy of the literary public. Mr. Henry Brown, the author of *The Sonnets of Shakespeare Solved* (London, J. Russell Smith, 1870), was in that year supporting life by manual labour.



Heminge and Condell's widow had 'formerly' four each, and the Burbadges the other eight. It may therefore be firmly concluded that Shakspere held one or more shares as a 'housekeeper' in the old Globe; but certain evidence on the point is still a *desideratum*. He may have bought himself into the lease; but whatever money he may have spent on the occasion, cannot possibly have amounted to a sum approaching that said to have been bestowed upon him by Southampton.

Continued relation with Southampton and Pembroke.

There is every reason to believe Shakspere to have continued to enjoy the goodwill of Southampton throughout his career as an author. The Earl in 1601 became involved in the complications and the consequences of Essex's plot, to which there are references, as can hardly be doubted, in Shakspere's *Henry VIII;* and *The Tempest*, written not earlier than 1610, was undoubtedly composed under the impressions created by the results of an expedition of discovery in 1608, which had been fitted out by Southampton, Pembroke, and others.

Shakspere purchases a house at Stratford (1597).

Meanwhile, Shakspere's affairs must have prospered; for in 1597 (the year which by a coincidence is that of the first undoubted impression of any of his plays) he purchased a house at Stratford, which was called the 'great house' already before his time, and which is the New Place of which the foundations remain, while Mr. Halliwell has succeeded in preserving the garden in its original dimensions[1].

Other signs of prosperity.

Shakspere's name occurs in three Stratford documents belonging to the period from 1597–98, which exhibit him as engaged in pecuniary transactions betokening a man of substance. And as it was about this time that a confirmation of a grant of arms was made to his father, it has been conjectured, with the utmost plausibility, that we have in this a further proof of the satisfactory condition of the affairs of Shakspere himself, who as an actor would not have applied for a grant of arms in his own name. His activity in these years of his life must have been almost unbounded; and indeed it is diffi-

[1] For an account of the house and its history, see Halliwell, pp. 164–167.

cult to look back without amazement upon the labours of theatrical managers and dramatic authors in general in this period. For a brief period the two great theatrical companies had either been united or had at least occupied the same house; and during these two years not less than forty plays were produced. A list of the rival manager shows that a new play was considered necessary about every seventeen days; and under these circumstances there is no difficulty in accounting for the phenomenon (which contributes to perplex the dates of many Shaksperean dramas) that plays on the same subject were acted by the rival companies[1]. It was in the midst of so breathless a competition for the public favour that Shakspere had by the year 1598, when Meres published his *Palladis Tamia*, produced not less than six comedies and six tragedies, which that writer esteemed fit evidence to prove him 'the most excellent in both kinds for the stage.'

Shakspere's reputation in 1598-9.

The popularity to which Shakspere's two epical poems had attained among the public and his sonnets 'among his priuate friends' is attested by the same writer. A laudatory notice (by Barnfield[2]) of the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece*, already mentioned, belongs to the same year; and in the following (1599) an enterprising publisher put forth a collection of miscellaneous poems, all of which were on the title-page included under the name of *The Passionate Pilgrim* and ascribed to Shakspere. It contained, together with some poems already printed by Barnfield as Shakspere's, and possibly his, others which are with certainty to be rejected, either as belonging to other authors, or as too unworthy of Shakspere to be accepted as his on so doubtful evidence[3]. Some of the pieces in the *Passionate Pilgrim* recur in *Love's Labour's Lost;* and the first two Sonnets reappear with variations in the *Sonnets*.

But if his poems brought fame, it was his connexion

[1] See Collier's Introduction to Henslowe's *Diary*, p. xviii *seqq*.

[2] In the *Encomion of Lady Pecunia*.

[3] Cf. Dyce, p. lxvi and *note*, as to Mr. Collier's enquiry into the two editions of Barnfield's book.

with the theatre which brought the materials of prosperity; and the income of the owners of the Globe must have increased, when their rivals of the Rose (in 1600) transported their establishment across the water to the Fortune. In the same year too, as has been seen, a monopoly was secured to the two companies, which, though infringed, must have depressed any serious rivalry. It is therefore in these, the concluding years of Queen Elisabeth's reign, that Shakspere may be concluded to have succeeded in completing the substantial edifice of a fair worldly prosperity. It was in this season that probably befell the opening of his acquaintance with Ben Jonson, then a young man and a beginner as a dramatist. There seems no reason to doubt the statement that Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* was brought out by Shakspere's company; and the pleasant anecdote that the author owed the acceptance of his play to Shakspere's own intervention, has in it no element of improbability. The progress of this acquaintance must have been of importance to Shakspere's life in London, whatever be the estimate we may form of Ben Jonson's relations as an author to his friend. Imagination may dwell on the meetings of a pair at once so well-assorted and so different; and picture, if it please, the interchange in theatre or in tavern of the voluminous and angry wit of the younger, and the gentler speech—perhaps at times the speaking silence—of the elder poet. But I prefer to abstain from imaginative efforts; and though the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, if not the Mermaid in Cornhill, seem to claim passing mention in a biographical sketch of Shakspere, it is to Ben Jonson's memory that the taverns of the Elisabethan age in general seem more especially consecrated[1]. With Richard Burbadge, the foremost actor of his company, Shakspere must have been on intimate

His continued success, 1600–3.

His friends.

Ben Jonson.

Richard Burbadge.

[1] A list of them is given in an old quarto entitled *Newes from Bartholomew Faire*. See Drake's *Shakspeare and his Times*, vol. ii. p. 133. For the attempts of legend to preserve specimens of the wit-combats between Shakspere and Ben Jonson, see *ib.* p. 593, *note*. In part they are extremely melancholy. Fuller's description of the wit-combats is well known, and has a very lifelike sound.

terms; and he is, with Heminge and Condell, remembered in the poet's will.

In the year 1602 he purchased on three occasions further property at Stratford; and as his name in 1603 appears in a royal warrant[1] second in the list of his company, his profits from its performances had doubtless by this time likewise increased.

The new sovereign's arrival in England was an event of which the most various classes of his new subjects—as well as of his old—naturally sought to take advantage. To Shakspere's company it brought the honour of being taken into the King's service (1603), to which relation formal expression was given by the name applied to them in the warrant of the King's 'servants.' King James had been kind to English actors in Scotland; but there is no proof of Shakspere's ever having visited that country. It seems highly improbable that he should have been absent from the scene of his activity between the years 1599 and 1601; and as to the previous ten years there is no proof of any English actors having crossed the border[2]. The complimentary lines to King James attributed to Shakspere cannot be proved to be his, and were probably written by 'his Majestis Printer[3].'

The King's servants (1603).

It is not known with certainty when Shakspere began to withdraw from the pursuit of his profession as an actor and from constant participation in the management of his company. His visits to Stratford must have been more frequent and more protracted, even if he had not actually become a permanent resident there, since he had purchased the house in New Place; and in 1605 he added to this the largest purchase of land in his native town which he ever completed. Moreover he is not known to have acted after the year 1603, though his name in 1604 still appears among the actors of the King's company. Curiously enough, it is at the close of this year 1604 that the company in question

Shakspere's withdrawal from theatrical life in London probably gradual.

[1] Given in Halliwell's *Life*, p. 203.
[2] See Collier's *Life*, pp. cxcv-cxcvii.
[3] Halliwell, p. 207, *note*.

attracted unfavourable comment by a play indiscreetly trenching upon the domain of too recent history; in 1605 they annoyed the City authorities by bringing an alderman on the stage; and in 1606 they contrived to offend the susceptibilities of the French ambassador[1]. In these occurrences may be perhaps recognised either a result of the withdrawal from active management of the member of the company whose discretion in such matters is proved by the indisputable evidence of the general character of his plays, or a cause for that withdrawal, not wholly dissimilar to that which, according to a probable conjecture, had imposed silence upon Shakspere at an early period of his career as a dramatist.

A supposed copy of a letter of the year 1608, signed H. S. and attributed to Southampton, requests the protection of 'the poore players of the Blacke ffryers' against the destruction of their playhouse contemplated by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen; and makes laudatory mention both of Shakspere and more emphatically of Richard Burbadge as actors, speaking of Shakspere as 'till of late' of good account in the company. But this letter is to be rejected as the reverse of genuine[2].

But though Shakspere seems about this time to have withdrawn from the active exercise of the actor's profession, his connexion with the stage had by no means been completely severed. The statement that in 1610 he was named with three others to preside over the 'Children of her Majesty's Revels,' though the draft warrant was never carried into effect, rests on the authority of a discredited document[3]. The fact that his interest in the profits of the Globe theatre finds no mention in his will, would seem to point to the probability of his having parted with it before his death, and he may have availed himself of the occasion to expend the proceeds for the benefit of his family—possibly of those members of it for whom the will makes no provision[4]. On the other

[1] See Collier, *Life*, pp. ccvii-xi.
[2] Ingleby, *Shakspere Controversy*, p. 258.
[3] *Ib.* p. 256.
[4] Cf. Halliwell, p. 291.

hand, it is certain that he bought a house in the Blackfriars as late as the beginning of 1613,—the year in which the Globe was destroyed by fire during a performance of *Henry VIII.*

His last years.

It may be regarded as upon the whole unlikely that Shakspere should have continued to write plays to the last, while it is impossible to say when he ceased to write. In any case Dr. Ward's hearsay information that Shakspere 'in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for itt had an allowance so large, that hee spent att the rate of £1000 a year,' may be reasonably suspected; it is precisely the kind of circumstantial item of 'literary intelligence' which is wont to come down into the country about the gains which accrue in the gold-paved streets of London.

His death (April 23, 1616).

No documentary notice of significance occurs of Shakspere's name till his death in 1616. On the other hand, tradition ascribes to him a variety of epigrams and epitaphs on which I see no reason to dwell. That he lived in material comfort is abundantly proved by incidental references to him as a proprietor, and by the contents of his will, which was executed on March 25, 1616. He is in it described as in perfect health and memory. But he died already a month afterwards at New Place, on April 23[1]. He was buried in Stratford Church on the 25th of the same month; the epitaph on the gravestone was on very doubtful authority ascribed to himself; the well-known monument, the fortunes of which I need not detail, was erected some time before 1623.

The impotence of scandal against him.

The story as to the cause of Shakspere's death rests on the authority of a tradition written down half a century after the event, and need therefore not be discussed. There is indeed nothing more remarkable about the anecdotes which tradition has accumulated around the few known facts of Shakspere's life, than the difficulty which scandal seems to have found in discovering materials in it. A few rough epigrams and snatches of verse, and the rumour

[1] Cervantes died on the same day.

that he died of a fever contracted by drinking too hard with Drayton and Ben Jonson, make up the sum total which has survived of the gossip which must have filled the little town, whose Puritan tendencies in the days of his latter years are sufficiently attested to make it unlikely that the player was regarded with much favour by Stratford respectability[1]. And to take a wider range, what has the scandal of an age contrived to leave behind it as blots, real or fictitious, upon his personal memory? The story of a boyish freak, in his youth; a 'green-room canard,' as it has been aptly termed[2], which Pope fathered upon Betterton, as to the parentage of Sir William D'Avenant, in his manhood; and the above explanation of the cause of his death, not specially heinous were it true, in his old age. The silence—or the comparative silence—of anecdotage is more than an accidental tribute to the conduct of a life.

Portraits of Shakspere.

The Stratford monument by Gerard Johnson (Jansen), which was certainly in existence in 1623, and the half-length portrait on the title-page of the folio of 1623, published by Shakspere's associates Heminge and Condell, which was engraved by Droeshout[3], are the only portraits of the poet which can be regarded as contemporary authorities as to his personal appearance. The countenance of the bust may have been copied from a mask taken from the dead poet, according to a common custom of the times; and a mask is actually claimed as a genuine relic by its German possessor[4]. The famous Chandos portrait is traced to the possession of the actor Joseph Taylor (who played Hamlet in 1596), and is said to have been painted either by his brother John Taylor or by Richard Burbadge.

[1] Plays were prohibited at Stratford in 1602 and 1612. Dyce, p. cx.

[2] See *Prefatory Memoir* to the *Dramatic Works of D'Avenant* (1872), p. xxii.

[3] It is prefixed to Mr. Collier's edition of 1844. It has the authority of Ben Jonson's tribute, which however, as Mr. Halliwell remarks, may have been written by Jonson before he saw the engraving. Boaden thought it represented Shakspere in a *character*, viz. that of Old Knowell in Jonson's play. The supposition is both ingenious and convenient.

[4] Dr. Becker of Darmstadt, private secretary to Princess Alice of Hesse. See K Elze, *Shakespeare's Bildnisse*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iv (1869).

The portrait by Cornelius Jansen bears the inscription 1610, and may have been painted in England, where this artist painted a picture of a daughter of Southampton. Into the question of the claims, absolute or relative, of these portraits I cannot enter. Nor is it necessary to indulge in speculations, whether the paucity of contemporary portraits of the poet—to adopt even the most favourable hypothesis as to their number—be attributable to the circumstances of his social position, or to his personal modesty. It is at least certain, that the fact well accords with our general conception of Shakspere's conduct of his life. The traditions which Aubrey handed down as to his personal appearance cannot be regarded as of very high value; the belief that he was lame rests mainly upon that very doubtful basis, a literal interpretation of passages in the *Sonnets* [1].

Summary.

It will be seen from the above sketch that if Steevens' well-known saying, that 'all that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare is that he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, married and had children there; went to London, where he commenced actor and wrote poems and plays; returned to Stratford, made his will, died and was buried,' is not absolutely the truth, it is at all events not far from it. Indeed, brief as the statement is, it here and there might be shown to err on the side of over-precision. One remark only may be added. There is nothing in what we know of the life of Shakspere to interfere with the noblest conception we may be able to form of his personal character and conduct; and from a survey of the dry details which the laborious industry of posterity has succeeded in bringing together concerning it, we may turn with a natural wish for more, but without any desire

[1] See French, *u. s.*, pp. 569-71, where it is ingeniously pointed out that Shakspere's lameness would not have interfered with his acting of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and would have actually accorded with the description of Adam in *As You Like It* (ii. 6). Cf. Waldron's *Sad Shepherd*, *Appendix*, p. 179. The Sonnets are the 37th and 89th, on the dubious authority of which this attempt has been made to include Shakspere in the list of great men with a deformity, on whom Burton so learnedly discourses in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (ii. 3. 1. 1).

for anything different, to the works in which he really lives.

Chronological order of Shakspere's plays.

The following is a list of Shakspere's plays in what, after the best attention I have been able to give to the subject[1], seems to me their most probable chronological order of composition. In it are included all the plays usually regarded as Shakspere's—in other words all those included in the First Folio (of 1623), with the addition of *Pericles* (which was included in the Third Folio—of 1663). The addition of an obelisk (†) denotes the fact that doubts have been thrown on Shakspere's authorship of the particular play, in whole or in part; but the plays which are at the present day generally considered *doubtful*, or which having been at one time or the other attributed to Shakspere, are now by general consent regarded as not his, are treated of separately. In the notes appended to the name of each play will be found brief statements as to their probable sources, and such general information with regard to subject and treatment as appears necessary[2].

Tests to be applied:

The chronology of Shakspere's plays is one of the most difficult, as it is beyond all doubt one of the most important, subjects of Shaksperean enquiry. While absolute certainty cannot be looked for with regard to the entire list, it may reasonably be hoped that many doubts will in course of time be removed, and that a canon of at least fairly permanent authority will be ultimately established. In any case, it may be useful to point out what are the tests which have been, and which in part still remain to be, applied to the several plays from this point of view. These

[1] I have to thank my friend Mr. T. N. Toller for valuable assistance in the drawing up of this list.

[2] The authorities from which these notes have been compiled are as far as possible given in each case. The principal are Malone (Boswell's *Variorum* edition of 1821), Collier, Dyce, Delius, Staunton, and other editors in the editions of Shakspere already referred to; Gervinus' *Shakespeare* (1849-50); Ulrici's *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art* (Eng. translation); Simrock's *Quellen des Shakspeare* (2nd edition, 1870); the *Publications* of the old *Shakespeare* and the *Percy Societies*, and the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft* (1866-74).

tests may be described as either *external* or *internal*, and the two groups may be subdivided as follows [1].

I. External.

I. External Tests.

(*a*) Mention in other works.

(*a*) The *terminus ad quem*, or the latest date by which particular plays must have been in existence (though not necessarily in the precise form in which we possess them), is fixed by a mention of them in other books or documents of certain date. The most important of these books for this purpose is the *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wit's Treasury*, by Francis Meres, printed in 1598 (according to Mr. Halliwell early in that year). Meres mentions six comedies and six tragedies by Shakspere, all of them, with the exception of one comedy, by the names which they bear in the First Folio [2]. Conversely, it may be concluded (though not with equal certainty) that when a play is not mentioned by Meres, it was either not yet in existence, or was for some special reason omitted by him. This converse conclusion cannot of course be drawn from the non-mention of plays in books not critical in their design. Such books are the Diaries which have been preserved from Shakspere's time [3].

(*b*) Allusions in other works.

(*b*) The *terminus ad quem* may also occasionally be thought to be fixed by allusions in other books of ascertained date to characters or passages in Shaksperean plays. On the nature of these allusions however depends in each case the value of the evidence.

[1] This attempt to distinguish the principal tests of the chronology of Shakspere's plays was made before the publication (in *The Academy*, Jan. 10, 1874) of a synopsis of a lecture by Mr. J. W. Hales on the *Succession of Shakspere's Plays*. I have permitted myself in one or two points to make use of his admirably clear scheme.

[2] The abbreviation M. in the list following denotes mention by Meres.

[3] An important body of evidence, as it was supposed, of this description has been completely discredited. I refer of course to the dates mentioned in the *Accounts of the Revels at Court*, by the list of plays in which it has been said that 'every edition of Shakspere since 1842 has been more or less modified.' The experts who examined the documents in question arrived at the conclusion that 'the whole body of Shaksperean illustration had been added to the original.' See *Athenaeum*, June 20, 1868.



(*c*) The *terminus ad quem* (not the actual date of composition) is fixed by the date of the first known publication of any particular play[1]. A play was generally, and often surreptitiously, published because of the popularity which it had achieved on the stage; but the degree to which this circumstance renders the dates of first production and publication near to one another can very rarely be conjectured. The mere date of entry of a play on the Stationers' Register[2] may prove nothing more than that the composition of the play in question was in hand, or in contemplation.

(*c*) First known publication, and entry on Stationers' Register.

(*d*) The date of the production of a play (doubtless hardly ever remote from that of the completion of the writing of it) is fixed by statements to the effect that such play was acted as a *new* play. But the term may be applied to the production of a mere revision of a play written at a previous period, and brought forward again with alterations or 'additions.'

(*d*) Mention of plays as new.

II. INTERNAL TESTS.

II. Internal.

(*a*) Though constituting a very uncertain test, the use of which demands far more sobriety of judgment than has frequently been displayed in its application, the mention of or allusion to particular facts, and references traceable to particular books or other plays of ascertained date, may be regarded as evidence showing the play in which they occur to have not been written before a particular date, or even to have probably been written about a particular date.

(*a*) Allusions in the plays.

(*b*) A comparison of the style and diction of the several plays may lead to conclusions of a safe though not precise kind as to their general order of sequence. An 'over-use of classical allusions,' a superabundance of 'puns and conceits,' an occasional tendency to 'bombast and rant' will mark a play as belonging to an early, involution of style as belonging to a late, period in the poet's literary career.

(*b*) Style.

(*c*) A close study of the versification of the several plays

(*c*) Versification.

[1] Denoted by P.

[2] Denoted by E.

will similarly help to determine their probable order of sequence. Under this head the following special tests will deserve to be applied, without being regarded as of equal value, or as either individually or collectively decisive:—

(a) Rhyme

(*a*) The use of rhyme (except of course in songs or snatches of song interspersed in the plays). Where this is abundant, it may be regarded as an indication of an early date; and a progress from more to less rhyme may be held to accompany the general progress of Shakspere as a dramatic writer[1].

[1] The whole subject of this 'rhyme-test' has quite recently—and while this work was proceeding through the press—been treated with unprecedented fulness, and still more emphatically unprecedented accuracy, by Mr. F. G. Fleay, in two papers *On Metrical Tests as applied to Dramatic Poetry*, with which the new Shakspere Society has opened its *Transactions*. As the result of his labours with reference to Shakspere, Mr. Fleay has printed a Metrical Table of the Plays, prefaced by a lucid exposition of his view of the value to be attached to the 'test' which he principally discusses. This Table shows the total numbers of lines, prose lines, blank verse lines, rhymed five-measure lines (and lines of other measures, as well as lines with double endings); and in an *Appendix* Mr. Fleay shows the results of the Table in a briefer one, calculated on the principle of 'taking the rhyme lines in the *verse scenes* of each play, and dividing the number of blank verse lines by the number of rhyme lines, omitting all the rhymes that occur in scenes which are with their exception written entirely *in prose*.' This seems an advisable limitation in an application of the 'test;' for it is certainly probable that it is in the scenes wholly in verse that a poet would more deliberately follow any particular tendency of this kind. Certain oddities of result apart (for which, as in the case of *Macbeth*, it is possible to suggest special reasons), the value of the 'rhyme-test' may in my opinion be held to be established to the following extent. It is one generally capable of fortifying conclusions which determine the arrangement of Shakspere's plays in periods or groups of chronological sequence—not necessarily the groups given by Mr. Fleay, but groups of this description. Even in these groups, however, it will be observed that, if I understand Mr. Fleay rightly, it is necessary to remember 'that the Comedies, Chronicle Histories, and Tragedies should be considered separately, and that Shakspere advisedly used different styles in these three classes.' It seems to follow from this and other considerations, that with reference to the order of individual plays belonging to these periods or groups it would be rash, in determining their relative order of chronological sequence, to attach much weight to the relative number of rhymed lines. And in no case should this or any other external test be allowed to outweigh other considerations of a more important character. I find it *e. g.* impossible to follow Mr. Fleay in assigning so comparatively late a place to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, or in holding *Richard II* to have been written before *Richard III*. Allowing for exceptions, the generally progressive nature of Mr. Fleay's Table is very striking, and confirms with remarkable force

(β) 'Stopped' and 'unstopped' lines.

(β) The proportion between what have been called 'stopped' and 'unstopped' lines. The use of this test is prejudiced by the difficulty of defining these terms. A 'stopped' line is one in which the sentence, or clause of the sentence, concludes with the line; but it is not always possible to determine what is to be regarded as the clause of a sentence, whether *e.g. and* is to be regarded (in strict syntax of course it is not) as beginning a new clause. The 'stopping' of the sense is in short often of more importance than the 'stopping' of the sentence, with which it by no means always coincides[1].

(γ) Feminine endings.

(γ) The number of feminine endings of lines (or of lines ending with a redundant syllable). The application of this test cannot be regarded as establishing more than general conclusions. While it is certain that Shakspere employed the feminine endings sparingly in many of his plays which on other grounds may be regarded as early, it is certain that in those plays which on other grounds may be regarded as belonging to a late period of his dramatic productivity he employed these endings largely[2].

the conclusions arrived at on evidence of a different character. It begins with *Love's Labour's Lost* (rhyme to blank verse as 1 to .6) and ends with *The Tempest* (1 to 729) and *The Winter's Tale* (1 to infinity; *i.e.* there are no rhymes in this play).

[1] There is another reason for applying this test with hesitation: that a very remarkable progress from the exclusion to the use of 'unstopped' lines is already observable in the later plays of Marlowe. On the whole subject of this test further enquiries must be awaited; meanwhile Mr. Furnivall has already published the following results obtained by him with regard to the 'earliest' and 'latest' plays:—

Proportion of unstopped lines to stopped ones:

Love's Labour's Lost . .	1 in 18.14	*Tempest*	1 in 3.2
Comedy of Errors . . .	1 in 10.7	*Cymbeline*	1 in 2.52
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1 in 10.0	*Winter's Tale*	1 in 2.12

Certainly a very striking contrast. See his letter to *The Daily News*, January 5, 1874.

[2] Mr. F. G. Fleay has kindly supplied me with a list of the number of feminine endings in the several plays, which now forms part of his larger Table:

Love's Labour's Lost	9	*King John*	54
Midsummer Night's Dream . .	29	1 *Henry IV*	60
Merry Wives of Windsor . . .	32	*Romeo and Juliet*	118

(δ) Other verse-tests.

(δ) To these tests of versification others may be added, which apply only to particular plays, but as to them fairly

Pericles	123	*Measure for Measure*	338
Much Ado	129	*Macbeth*	339
Comedy of Errors	137	*3 Henry VI*	346
1 Henry VI	140	*Julius Caesar*	369
Richard II	148	*Troilus and Cressida*	441
Twelfth Night	152	*Tempest*	476
Titus Andronicus	154	*Hamlet*	508
2 Henry IV	203	*King Lear*	567
Two Gentlemen of Verona	203	*Richard III*	570
As You Like It	211	*Anthony and Cleopatra*	613
All's Well	223	*Winter's Tale*	639
2 Henry VI	255	*Othello*	646
Taming of the Shrew	260	*Coriolanus*	708
Timon	267	*Cymbeline*	726
Henry V	293	*Henry VIII*	1195
Merchant of Venice	297		

With regard to this list, it will of course be observed in the first place that any conclusions drawn from it as to the probable chronological sequence of the plays must be modified by two considerations, as to which Mr. Fleay's Table likewise supplies the necessary information, viz. (1) the length of each play, and (2) the amount of prose contained in it. The former consideration would help in some measure to account *e.g.* for the position in the list of *Richard III* (3,599 lines in the play), which on other grounds must be placed far earlier, and the latter for that of *The Merry Wives* (2,723 lines in prose out of 3,099), which must probably be placed far later. Yet even if these circumstances be taken into account, many strange anomalies remain. The odd position of *Pericles* and *Titus Andronicus* will not astonish those who regard these plays as being only in part from Shakspere's hand; and the same remark will, in the opinion of some, account for the vagaries played in the list by the several Parts of *Henry VI*. The uncertainty as to the date of *The Taming of the Shrew* is not removed by the central position which it here occupies; but the question as to whether it is to be regarded as a play by Shakspere has to be determined in the first instance. But the uncertainty of the test in individual instances is illustrated by the nearness to one another in this list, as compared too with Mr. Fleay's rhyme-test list, of *Hamlet* and *Richard III* (plays of nearly equal length—3,924 and 3,599 lines respectively), and still more by the difference between its results in the case of the *First* and of the *Second Part of Henry IV*, which can hardly have been written at any great distance of time from one another, and which contain (speaking roughly) about the same proportion of prose and verse, without differing very appreciably in length (the *Second Part* is rather longer, but contains rather more prose than the *First*).

On the other hand, the results as to the plays from *Julius Caesar* onwards (with the exception of *Richard III*) tally remarkably with conclusions based on other grounds. The case of *Henry VIII* is of course very peculiar; the abundance of feminine endings in this play has been traced by some critics to the supposed co-operation of Fletcher; and Mr. Spedding (in a paper contributed to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1850, and reprinted in the *Transactions*

help to establish the probability of a very early or late date. Thus it has been pointed out that in the rhyming parts of two plays to which on other grounds an early origin must be ascribed[1], there is often great irregularity in the trimeter couplet, one-half of the verse differing in metre from the other. Or again, it has been remarked that the freedom from a strict observance of the laws of metre to which Shakspere gradually attained is in plays which are on other grounds reckoned as his latest carried to the length of carelessness; and that 'in some of the Roman plays and in *Henry VIII* he reaches the point of almost failing to mark his verse by caesura or by final pause, very often allowing the place of the last accent to be filled by a syllable, frequently a monosyllabic word, which cannot be accented[2].' The occurrence of broken lines and of Alexandrines may also be taken into account.

(*d*) 'Mental' tests.

(*d*) Finally, that highest and most comprehensive kind of criticism which takes into account the entire mental growth of the poet, may arrive at conclusions of a more or less certain character respecting the order of the plays. It will endeavour to trace in them the evidence of the artistic progress of the writer—in construction, in characterisation, in taste, in depth of humour and pathos, in self-control, in

of the new Shakspere Society) and Mr. Fleay have sought to divide the scenes in the play between Shakspere and Fletcher, not only according to the 'mental' test, but also according to this test of versification. Cf. below as to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which was actually published as the joint work of Shakspere and Fletcher.

Hertzberg appears to have engaged in investigations of the same kind as Mr. Fleay's; he regards the increase of feminine endings in Shakspere's plays as regularly progressive according to the dates of their composition; thus he finds 15 *per cent.* in the *Merchant of Venice*, 32 in *The Tempest*, 44 in *Henry VIII*. Cf. K. Elze, *Die Abfassungszeit des Sturms* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. viii (1872). Hertzberg's, ten Brink's, and Mr. Furnivall's researches into the chronology and genuineness of the poems of, or attributed to, Chaucer, which proceed in part from a similar basis, are well known.

[1] *Comedy of Errors* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. Cf. Abbott's *Shakespeare Grammar*, p. 407.

[2] Grant White, *u. s.*, pp. 244, 245. I presume this to be the 'weak monosyllabic ending,' from the application of which 'test' Mr. J. K. Ingram (see *The Academy*, April 25, 1874) has found results in some respects opposite to Mr. Fleay's.

moral purpose, in power of thought, in his views of man and his being, of life and death, of time and eternity. It will be wise if it abstains from pressing the conclusions to which it may attain on such points too closely, or from insisting on them too dictatorially. Historical criticism will lend its modest aid to estimate the influence perceptible in particular plays of a particular time; literary criticism (in the narrower sense of the term) will contribute its indications of literary influences to which at particular periods the poet may appear to have been more especially subject. As no one would deny that certain of the plays were written at an earlier date than certain others, this method of enquiry may, from an almost infinite number of points of view, be extended to the whole of the list. In the same way, it will in many cases be clearly demonstrable that two or more particular plays belong to the same period in the poet's career and developement. But it will never be forgotten that play-writing was to Shakspere a profession by which he earned his bread as well as an art by which he was to reap his fame; and that there is no incongruity from the former point of view in juxtapositions which seem intolerable from the other. Evidence fixing a date by means of certain or approximately certain facts must therefore override what may be described as evidence of character; and if we find Shakspere, according to the former, turning from gay comedy to the delineation of tragic character, it is only the pedantry of criticism which will cry Impossible! On the other hand, doubtful evidence of the former kind will not be allowed to outweigh conclusions of the latter possessing real force; no mere versification test *e.g.* will induce us to date a manifestly early historical drama as late as a tragedy presenting in its existing form the perfection of Shakspere's tragic art.

It only needs to be added that the application of these tests will be exposed to a difficulty of a special kind, where there is reason of an external or internal character to suppose any particular play to be a revision or reproduction of an earlier work by either Shakspere himself or by another



hand, or where there are *primâ facie* grounds for the belief that the play as we possess it was not completed in its present condition by Shakspere alone.

The reader will, I am assured, not for a moment hold me guilty of the presumption of pretending, in drawing up the list which follows, to have systematically applied all or most of the tests which I have enumerated. I have simply applied such as it was in my power to apply with the aid of the authorities at my command; and in some cases have felt doubts not less grave than the reader may feel as to the justice of my conclusions[1].

Shakspere's plays.

Titus Andronicus.

(1) TITUS ANDRONICUS. (I) † P. 1600. M.

Shakspere's authorship of this play has been doubted by Farmer (who thought it might be by Kyd), Malone, Coleridge (who remarked on the unlikeness of the blank verse to Shakspere's, and considered that only passages in act ii. are by him), Drake, and Dyce. On the other hand it is accepted as Shakspere's by Collier, Knight, Ulrici, Delius, and H. Kurz (see *Zu Titus Andronicus* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. v, 1870); so that Mr. Fleay's remark (in a paper contributed to the *Transactions* of the new Shakspere Society, *On the Authorship of the Taming of the Shrew*), that 'no one among sane English critics believes it to be Shakspere's,' must be taken *cum grano*. Mr. Fleay gives a list of not less than 121 words and phrases occurring in *Titus Andronicus*, but not in the undoubted plays of Shakspere. Gervinus seems on the whole inclined to accept Ravenscroft's tradition that in this play we have only an older piece elaborated by Shakspere.

[1] The Roman and the Arabic numerals immediately *after* the titles of the plays in the following list denote respectively the periods marked out by Gervinus and the chronology adopted by Malone.* These are added not as the most certain, but as the most typical examples of two very different methods of criticism. Gervinus' periods are three in number, the second being subdivided into three groups, *viz.* (*a*) erotic, (*b*) historical plays, and (*c*) comedies. Malone omits *Titus Andronicus*, *Pericles*, and *King John* from his list (vol. ii. pp. 295, 296), but (p. 351) introduces *King John* between *Romeo and Juliet* and 1 *Henry IV*. The Arabic numerals enclosed in brackets with the letter F (thus: F 1) denote the periods distinguished by Mr. Fleay as agreeing with the 'rhyme-test;' but it should be here observed that between the second and third of these periods there is from this point of view no break.

A '*titus and ondronicus*' is mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary* as a 'new' play acted January 23, 1594[1], and an '*Andronicous*' as acted June 5, 1594. But a play is mentioned by Henslowe as acted April 11, 1592, under the title of '*titus and vespacia*,' by 'Lord Strange's men' (*i.e.* the Lord Admiral's company). This play is the *Andronicus* printed among the *Engelische Comoedien vnd Tragedien* (plays acted in Germany by the English comedians) in 1620 under the title of (translated) *A most lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus and the Haughty Empress, wherein are found memorable Events*, and reprinted by Tieck and by A. Cohn (*Shakespeare in Germany*, pp. 157 *seqq.*). In this play, as Cohn points out, a noble Roman of the name of Vespasian (who at the close becomes emperor) appears; hence the name.

As this play, doubtless substantially that of 1592, has nothing in common with the Shaksperean but the 'rude material' (Kurz), it is certain that at least one play on the subject then existed besides that attributed to Shakspere. Whether that acted in January 1594 was identical with that acted in June, is more open to doubt. On the title-page of the quarto of 1600 the play is said to have been several times acted by the servants of Lords Pembroke, Derby (Strange), and Sussex, as well as by those of the Lord Chamberlain. In the Register of the Stationers' Company, February 1594, a *Titus Andronicus* was entered, together with a ballad on the same subject: *A noble Roman Historie of Titus Andronicus*. This ballad is probably that reprinted by Percy in his *Reliques* from an undated collection, the *Golden Garland of Princely Delights*, and thought by him to be older than the Shaksperean drama. The ballad differs in parts of the story from both Shakspere's and the English-German play; so that the existence of a third play on the subject seems probable. The story of Titus Andronicus is referred to by Paynter in his *Palace of Pleasure*, vol. ii (1567), and in the play *A Knack to know a Knave* (1594).

In the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) Ben Jonson speaks of *Titus Andronicus* as a play which, like *Jeronimo*, dates 'these twenty-five or thirty years' back. This would carry the date of its production to 1589 or an earlier year. Kurz points out that the play is in manner earlier than *Henry VI*; and that while it contains no reminiscences from *Tamerlane*, it contains one from the *Spanish Tragedy*.

[1] I have changed Old Style to New for the sake of the reader's convenience.

The evidence, then, seems to point to the conclusions that this play, if Shakspere's, was written by 1589, and produced by that year; and that it is probably the third of the three plays mentioned by Henslowe, under the date of June 3, 1594.

The subject of Wilson's *Andronicus Comnenius* (1664) and that of a previous anonymous play on the same story (*Andronicus*, 1661) have of course no connexion with that of our play.

(2) HENRY VI. PART I. †
(3) HENRY VI. PART II. †
(4) HENRY VI. PART III. †
} (I). Henry VI.

It will be most convenient to treat of these three plays together, without by so doing at once begging the question as to their authorship.

The *First Part* was, so far as is known, first published in the folio of 1623; the *Second* and *Third Part* were likewise first printed in their present form in the same collection.

In Henslowe's *Diary* a play called *Harey the VI* is noted as acted on March 3, 1592, and subsequently repeated not less than twelve times. In his *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592) Nash alludes to a play in which 'brave Talbot' was made 'to triumph again on the stage.' This might refer to act ii. of the *First Part*.

In 1594 and 1595 two books, entitled respectively *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey, and the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall End of the proud Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jacke Cade, and the Duke of Yorkes first claime vnto the Crowne*, and *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole Contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke, as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants*, were published by a bookseller of the name of Thomas Millington. (These plays are reprinted from the above editions in Halliwell's *First Sketches of the Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1843), and in vol. v. of the *Cambridge Shakespeare*.) Of both these plays a second edition appeared in 1600, published by the same bookseller.

In the Epilogue to *Henry V* (printed in 1600, and incontestably Shakspere's) the poet refers to plays (more than one, *i.e.*, not

necessarily more than two), previously acted in the same theatre, on the reign of Henry VI in these terms:

> 'Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd King
> Of France and England, did this king succeed,
> Whose state so many had the managing
> That they lost France and made his England bleed:
> Which oft our stage hath shown; and, *for their sake*,
> In your fair minds let this acceptance take.'

In the passage already quoted (*ante*, p. 274, *note*) in his *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), addressed to Marlowe, Peele, and probably Lodge, Greene (not in this particular passage manifestly addressing any particular one of the three) says: 'Trust them [the players] not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his tygres heart wrapt up in a player's hide supposes hee is as well able to bombaste out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country.' The pun leaves no doubt as to Shakspere's being aimed at; and the phrase about the 'tygres heart' is clearly a parody of the line,

> 'O tyger's heart, wrapt in a woman's hide,'

which occurs in the *First Part of the Contention.*

On the above external evidence, and the internal evidence of the five plays enumerated, as compared with one another and with plays of Shakspere, Marlowe, Lodge, Peele, and Greene, are founded the various theories as to the authorship of the five plays in question.

It may be stated at once that there is no evidence to identify *Part I* of *Henry VI* either with the *Harey the VI* noted by Henslowe, or with the play alluded to by Nash. In our own days rival theatres are wont to produce plays on subjects similar to those which have proved successful under dramatic treatment; in the Elisabethan age a successful play inevitably produced another on the *same* subject.

The most elaborate statement of reasons for rejecting Shakspere's authorship of *Part I* of *Henry VI* is Malone's in the *Dissertation on the Three Parts of Henry VI*, which will be found in vol. xviii of the edition cited. His reasons are chiefly internal: he regards the diction, versification, and allusions as un-Shaksperean; besides which he points out certain contradictions (of no great significance) between this play and undoubtedly genuine

Shaksperean dramas. He thus arrived (contrary to an earlier opinion of his) at the conclusion that the play was altogether not Shakspere's. Dyce likewise thinks that in this play 'little or nothing of Shakespeare is to be traced.' The directly opposite view is taken by Ulrici, who in his *Lectures* (p. 387) speaks of the Three Parts as a great trilogy, of which he defines the ground-idea; and who in a more recent discussion of the subject (*Christopher Marlowe und Shakespeare's Verhältniss zu ihm*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. i, 1864) emphatically insists upon Shakspere's authorship of every one of the Parts. This view was also that of the earlier German Shakspere-critics, Schlegel and Tieck. Collier's opinion is also 'directly adverse to that of Malone,' though he speaks of 'the fact, of which there is the strongest presumptive evidence, that more than one author was engaged on the work.' Knight attributes the whole of the play to Shakspere.

The general tendency of modern English Shakspere-criticism seems to agree with that of Coleridge, who believed many lines to have been written by Shakspere, while he considered *e.g.* the opening unlike him. Gervinus thought that Shakspere's share in the play was confined to those passages which connect it with the Second and Third Part; the whole he considered an example of the way in which Shakspere did *not* write historical tragedy. This agrees with the view of Hallam.

To the fact that the play is mainly founded not on Holinshed, but on Hall, I should not be disposed to attach a decisive importance. On the other hand, the extraordinary divergences from Shakspere's usual method of treating a historical subject, the want of discretion and sobriety shown in the free introduction of all manner of idle tales, taken together with the undoubted peculiarities of style noticed by Malone, render it difficult to accept the play as essentially Shakspere's. The choice remains between supposing him to have written none of it—against which there are abundant arguments—and to have merely contributed passages and even scenes as an adapter; and I see no reason against accepting this latter hypothesis.

The *Second and Third Parts* were undoubtedly composed, in the form in which they remain to us, in connexion with the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie*. Malone calculated that of the 6,043 lines which these two *Parts* contain, 2,373 were founded on the two other plays; and without pretending to have verified the calculation, it is easy to convince oneself that it cannot be far from the truth.

Moreover, the first three acts of *Part III* and the whole of *Part II* exhibit no important variations in the conduct of the story from the *True Tragedie* and the *Contention* respectively.

Now, as there can be no reason whatever, especially if the passage in the epilogue to *Henry V* be taken into account, to doubt that Shakspere claimed the authorship of the *Second and Third Parts*, the question is merely as to their relationship, and that of Shakspere as their professed author, to the other two plays. Are the changes made in their nature such as to lead to the supposition that he was revising the work of another author, or to the opposite supposition that he was revising his own work?

The latter view is that maintained by Ulrici, who considers that the two plays (*Contention* and *Tragedie*) were 'the first youthful endeavours of Shakspere in the field of the historical drama, the first sketches for the trilogy of *Henry VI*, but that in the earliest impressions they have come down to us only in a mutilated and corrupt condition' (*Jahrbuch*, *u. s.*, p. 85). Charles Knight likewise accepts the *Contention* and the *Tragedie* as Shakspere's; and the same is the result of the examination of the subject by Delius, who seeks to account for the imperfection of the plays, as printed, by supposing them to have been obtained by the publisher from actors, and possibly manipulated by some 'subordinate' poet.

A kind of middle view is that taken by Halliwell and the editors of the *Cambridge Shakespeare*, according to whom these two plays are not entirely Shakspere's work, but furnish internal proofs of his having had a considerable share in their composition. The third view is that elaborately argued by Malone, and substantially adopted by Mr. Collier, when he says that Shakspere's property was 'only in the additions and improvements he introduced, which are included in the folio of 1623.'

While it is difficult not to agree with Ulrici that what I have termed the 'middle view' is one tending towards the ultimate acceptance of his own, I cannot, with all respect for his authority, see my way to accepting the latter. Malone's argument, even if not in all its parts deserving Porson's praise of 'one of the most convincing pieces of criticism he had ever met with,' appears to me unanswerable, so far as its *negative* portion is concerned. The argument that *Part I* of *Henry VI* was not written by the author of the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie* is of small importance if Shakspere's authorship of *Part I* be rejected. The proof that Shakspere was not the author of the two plays in question rests

essentially on the nature of the changes made, which are of so peculiar a nature—including matters of fact as well as of phraseology—as to controvert, in my opinion, the supposition that the hand which revised was that which originally wrote them. I attach less importance to the circumstance that Shakspere's name was not connected with the *Contention* or the *True Tragedie* till their republication in 1619; or to the other that they were substantially founded on Hall, whereas Shakspere in his dramas from English history generally used Holinshed; or to the third, that the *True Tragedie* was in 1595 published as acted by Lord Pembroke's servants, which was not the company for which Shakspere's undisputedly genuine dramas were written. It is by the internal evidence that the answer to the question must be decided, and this appears to me sufficient.

On the other hand, Malone's attempt to show that Greene, or Peele, or both, were the author or authors of these plays (as well as of the old *King John*, printed 1591) seems to me a failure; nor can I think otherwise of Dyce's suggestion attributing them to Marlowe (whom Malone afterwards regarded as the author of the old *King John*). Ulrici (in the *Jahrbuch*) has I think satisfactorily disposed of these suppositions. Undoubtedly there are in Marlowe's *Edward II* a number of passages substantially identical with others in the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie* (see Dyce's Introduction to Marlowe's *Works*, pp. lxii–lxiii); but the general difference of manner is an unanswerable objection against assuming Marlowe to have been more than a contributor, at the most, to these plays; he could not *e.g.* have produced the scenes descriptive of Jack Cade's rebellion. The famous passage in Greene's pamphlet fails, to a candid criticism, to imply the appropriation of one or more *plays*, or the metaphor would have been the reverse of apt. The quotation about the 'tygres heart' may be a mere coincidence; or if aimed at Shakspere, it may have been directed at the reproduction of this passage in the *Third Part* of *Henry VI* itself, and Shakspere may not unnaturally afterwards have omitted it.

I thus arrive at the conclusion that Shakspere in the *Second and Third Part* of *Henry VI* elaborated the two old plays adverted to; but that the authorship of these remains unknown. This may be a result vexatious to the kind of criticism which is dissatisfied with leaving anything unsettled; but a very strong proof seems to be requisite before authors of so distinct a style as Marlowe or Peele or Greene (to whom Gervinus ascribes the plays) can be held

responsible for them. In manner they undoubtedly resemble *Titus Andronicus*, which was probably founded by Shakspere on an older play. The author of this older play remains unknown; and so, as far as I can see, does the author of the *Contention* and the *True Tragedie*.

Love's Labour's Lost.

(5) LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST. (II a) (8) (F 1) P. 1598. M.

In this play is doubtless to be recognised one of Shakspere's earliest comedies. Collier considers it to have been probably written before 1590; and the peculiarities, not to say crudities, of its versification make it impossible to assign to it a much later date. The play is mentioned in a poem entitled *Alba, or the Month's Minde of a Melancholy Lover*, by R. T. (Robert Tofte?), printed in 1598.

The source of the plot remains undiscovered; and it is therefore an open question whether it be Shakspere's own invention. There is no historical foundation for the incident of the dispute as to Aquitaine between France and Navarre, and no King Ferdinand ever ruled over the latter realm. On the other hand, a personal reference has been sought (by Tieck and others) in the character of Holofernes (whose name is doubtless taken from Rabelais' *Gargantua*) to an Italian teacher of the name of Florio, who was the author of an Italian dictionary called *The World of Words*, dedicated to Southampton, and who is supposed (by Mr. Massey) to have incurred Shakspere's resentment by speaking of 'the plays that are neither right comedys nor right tragedys, but representations of Historys without decorum.' There is no evidence to bear out the conjecture; and as Delius observes, such an attempt at a personal caricature was not in Shakspere's manner. But commentators will never obey the injunction of Ben Jonson, and will remain 'politic pick-locks of the scene' to the end. It is well pointed out by Simrock that the characters of the pedant and the boasting soldier (the *capitan spavento* of the Italian and the *thraso* of the Latin stage) are favourite characters of Italian comedy.

The ballad of *King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid* (iv. 1 *et al.*) will be found in Percy's *Reliques;* on the phantastical Monarcho (mentioned *ib.*) an epitaph had been printed in a collection by Thomas Churchyard (1580); and the 'dancing horse' spoken of by Moth (i. 2) is the famous 'Bankes's Horse' on whom Thomas Bastard published an epigram in 1598, and who is honoured with mention by two historical authorities, Cardinal Morton and Sir

Walter Ralegh, as well as by Ben Jonson. On the pageant of *The Nine Worthies* (act v) I have touched above (p. 82, *note*). The verses 'If love make me forsworn' (iv. 2), 'On a day' (iv. 3), and the sonnet 'Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,' were reprinted as Shakspere's by Jaggard in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599).

Gervinus has pointed out parallel passages to this play in two of the *Sonnets* (cxxvii and cxxxvii). Not only does the humour of the character of Armado in this play turn so greatly upon his fantastical, and that of Holofernes upon his pedantic fashions of speech, but the whole dialogue among the courtiers and the ladies is so impregnated with the spirit of fashionable wit-combats, that Shakspere as a matter of course frequently employs expressions resembling, or borrowed from, the author of *Euphues*. Not less than twelve such have been traced by Mr. Rushton (*Shakespeare's Euphuism*), which I cannot examine in detail; they include the Biblical phrase 'the weaker vessel,' which Shakspere frequently uses elsewhere.

(6) THE COMEDY OF ERRORS. (I) (5) (F 1) M.

The Comedy of Errors.

Besides the play noted *ante*, p. 145, the *Menaechmi taken out of Plautus*, to which Shakspere's comedy has no resemblance except in subject, a *Historie of Error* is mentioned, as having been performed by the children of Paul's 'on New yeres daie at night,' 1576–7. Dyce points out that, as the dramas performed by these boys were generally founded on classical stories, this piece may be presumed to have been in a large measure founded on the comedy of Plautus. The same piece was acted at Windsor in 1583. In 1594 'a *Comedy of Errors* (like to Plautus his Menechmus)' is stated to have been acted at Gray's Inn. Shakspere's play mentioned under the name of *Errors* by Meres was afterwards reproduced before King James in 1604. There seems no reason against identifying it with the play acted at Gray's Inn in 1594, in the composition of which Shakspere may have had the advantage of seeing in MS. (for it was not published till 1595) W. Warner's *Menaechmi from Plautus* aforesaid. Theobald pointed out the pun about 'France making war against her hair' as alluding to the civil war about the succession of Henry IV, which continued on this issue from 1589–1593, and thus helping to fix the date of the play. In any case it was one of Shakspere's earliest comedies, and probably written, as Collier thinks, before 1590,—most likely in 1589. The doggrel fourteen-syllable lines of the

Dromios, as Collier points out, favour the supposition that Shakspere made use of an older play, and this may have been the *Historie of Error* acted in 1577.

The source of the *Menaechmi* of Plautus is of course Greek; and seems to be established to have been not Epicharmus, but Posidippus. Greek comedies turning on the likeness of twins seem to have been invariably called Δίδυμοι, and plays under this title are mentioned from the hands of six different authors. Variations of the same idea occur in the *Amphitryo* and in Philocomasium's story in the *Miles Gloriosus*. The modern drama has reproduced the subject in a large variety of comic pieces. (Cf. Brix, Introduction to *Ausgew. Komödien des Plautus*, Bd. iii.)

It may be added that the term 'errors' seems to have been a current stage term for confusions arising out of mistakes of person. Bacon in his *Advancement of Learning* (Bk. ii. p. 238; Kitchin) speaks of some 'comedies of errors, wherein the mistress and the maid change habits.' This cannot of course refer to Shakspere's play, which Bacon may have witnessed as a member of Gray's Inn.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

(7) THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA. (I) (5) (F 2) M.

Internal evidence—the slightness of the construction and of the characterisations, as well as the lyrical colour of the diction—seem to support the view that this play is one of the earliest among Shakspere's comedies. As against these considerations I cannot attach a decisive weight to the general agreement between the 'tests' of rhyme and feminine endings, which would assign to it a later date[1].

There is no *proof* that this comedy is, as Halliwell thought possible, an expansion of an older play. Tieck, however, already recognised in the tragedy of *Julius and Hippolyta*, another of the old plays acted in Germany by the English comedians, a piece resembling in subject the principal plot of *The Two Gentlemen*, and thence conjectured the probability of both having been founded upon some earlier play. This piece has been reprinted by Cohn, in his *Shakespeare in Germany*, pp. 113–156 (cf. *ib.* p. cxi). Here,

[1] Mr. Fleay's paper on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Twelfth Night* in the Transactions of the new Shakspere Society (vi) reaches me only just in time for mention. He believes 'that only the first two acts are by Shakspere, and that these were written between 1593 and 1596.' Mr. Furnivall, in his comments, vigorously controverts these opinions.

then, we have an indication of Shakspere's having borrowed the idea of the treachery of Proteus to his friend from an earlier source; while there is no doubt as to the source of the underplot of the comedy (Julia's love to Proteus), which is to be found in the popular Spanish collection of romances (connected after a fashion resembling that of the *Decamerone*), the *Diana Enamorada* of Jorge de Montemayor. This book (in which Don Felix corresponds to Proteus, and Felismena, who relates her own story, to Julia) was first published in 1542 (see Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, iii. 82), and attained to an extraordinary popularity. The first complete English translation of it, by Bartholomew Yonge (from which Mr. Collier has reprinted the *Story of the Shepherdess Felismena*, in vol. ii of his *Shakspeare's Library*), was not published till 1598; but it existed in MS. already in 1582 or 1583; and a play called *The History of Felix and Philomena* was exhibited at Greenwich already in 1584. Montemayor could hardly, as Simrock suggests, have seen Bandello's novel (Bandello's novels were not published till 1554), or Cinthio's (written before, but printed after, Bandello's), which resemble the story of Felismena in subject, and to one or both of which, as will be seen, the main source of Shakspere's *Twelfth Night* is to be traced. The eclogue of Barnaby Googe, published 1563, is a versified imitation of the episode of the *Diana*, introducing the name of Valerio. A scene in the *Two Gentlemen* (iv. 1) may have been founded by Shakspere on Sidney's *Arcadia*, which also circulated in MS. long before it was printed (in 1590); but the resemblance may be, as Delius terms it, purely accidental.

Klein (*Gesch. des Dramas*, iv. 785 *seqq.*) has pointed out the resemblance between Shakspere's comedy and Parabosco's *Il Viluppo* (1559 or earlier), which he regards as one of the sources of the former. Shakspere may possibly have had some knowledge of this comedy; the peculiar reference of Julia to her 'black' complexion (iv. 4) certainly recalls the artificial darkness of Parabosco's page *Brunetto* (though it will be remembered how Shakspere's Sonnet cxxvii refers to a lady of 'raven black' eyes, and has been thought to allude to a famous historical beauty, Lady Penelope Rich), nor is this the only parallelism. But Klein has assumed that the *Diana* was not published till 1560, which appears erroneous; so that Parabosco's play may after all have had the same source as Shakspere's.

Other parallel passages, besides that incidentally noticed, have

been pointed out between the *Sonnets* and *The Two Gentlemen*. There are two allusions in the comedy (i. 1 and iii. 1) to the story —not necessarily to the poem—of *Hero and Leander*. Launce's pun (ii. 3) about the 'unkindest *tied* that ever man tied' also occurs in Lyly's *Endymion*.

The title of the play may have been suggested by the second title of Munday's *Fidele and Fortunatus* (entered at Stationers' Hall 1584): *Two Italian Gentlemen*.

The Taming of the Shrew.

(8) THE TAMING OF THE SHREW. (I) (11).

The date of this play is in some degree determinable only on the assumptions that it was a Shaksperean version of another, and earlier, play, and that the poet could hardly have subjected himself to such a task in the later part of his career. This earlier play, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called the Taming of a Shrew*, was printed in 1594 'as it was sundry times acted by the Earle of Pembrook his servants,' and reprinted in 1596 and 1607. It has been edited by Mr. Amyot for the *Shakesp. Society's Publ.* (1844), from the earliest text; that in the *Six Old Plays* (1779) is the text of 1607. It has been conjectured that this was the play revived by Dekker in 1602 under the title of *Medicine for a Curst Wife*.

Shakspere's play in general follows the earlier one, in the Induction as well as in the piece itself; and the incident of the Pedant personating Vincentio, which Dyce says is not contained in the earlier play, seems certainly to be in it (see Amyot, p. 32). On the other hand, Shakspere has added the scenes which are concerned with the rivalry of the three suitors of Bianca.

I have spoken of the second play only as Shakspere's; for few will be found to accept Pope's view, according to which both were by him. It cannot be proved that the play of 1594 was the earlier piece; and the absence of any mention of the comedy in Meres is not decisive either way. If however as seems upon the whole probable, Shakspere's version was produced before 1598, the view of Delius may be accepted, that Meres did not regard the comedy as entitled to rank as an original work. The earlier play has been ascribed to Marlowe, without any probability.

As to the original source of both plays, the following may be noted:—

1. The idea of the Prelude and Interlude is very ancient, though it does not appear whence it was derived by the English dramatist. Simrock points out an anecdote of a precisely similar jest attributed



to Philip the Good of Burgundy, in Goulart's *Thrésor d'histoires admirables et merveilleuses de notre temps* (1607); and it is remarkable that a merry comedy is here said to have been acted before the pseudo-Duke. Goulart, he conjectured, derived the story from Heuterus *de rebus burgundicis*, whence Burton reproduced it in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). It is said to have already made its appearance in England in a collection of jests continued by R. Edwards, and printed in 1570. The date of the ballad on the subject printed in Percy's *Reliques* is unknown.

But the origin of the story has been traced further back; every one remembers its occurrence in the *Arabian Nights*, and it has been suggested that the trick was first told to the Duke of Burgundy by one of the Eastern embassies which visited his Court, and repeated by him in imitation of the good Chaliph Haroun Alraschid. I cannot see any very striking resemblance in the famous anecdote of Dionysius and Damocles, as referred to by Cicero (*Tusc. Disp.* v. 21). Steevens, however, pointed out a curiously parallel passage to one in Shakspere's Induction.

Calderon's *Life's a Dream* is based on a similar idea; and the plot of the Induction has been too frequently reproduced on the stage to make enumeration possible.

2. The main action of the comedy, viz. the cure of the shrew, is to be found in the *Notte piacevoli* of Straparola (viii. 2), first published at Venice in 1550; and also in two old Spanish novels in *El Conde Lucanor*, by Don Juan Manuel, a prince of Castile (published apparently 1643). A still closer resemblance is traceable in an old Spanish story, printed by Köhler in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii (1868). In fact, as Simrock says, the story is the common property of a variety of ages and peoples, and may be traced in a Persian, as well as in Old-German sources. There is an old German play, by Hans Sachs, on the subject; and in Basile's *Pentamerone* (a collection of Neapolitan stories) there is one on a similar theme, in which however the transition to the story of *Patient Grissel* is already recognisable. Lastly, the old English 'merry jeste' of 'the Wife lapped in Morels Skin' (for which see Amyot, *u. s.*) seems to have been printed between 1550 and 1560; its resemblance to the story of the plays is also merely general.

As there is no proof of the author of the old *Taming of the Shrew* having been a reader of Straparola, it cannot be determined in what form the story first reached him.

3. The episode of Bianca and Lucentio forms, as already stated,

part of what was added to the earlier play by Shakspere. It is taken directly from the fourth and fifth acts (see Klein, iv. 338 *seqq.*) of Ariosto's *Gli Suppositi*, translated by Gascoigne; and as both Klein and Simrock point out, Shakspere has nowhere borrowed with less important modifications.

A contributor to the *Shakesp. Soc. Papers* (vol. i. p. 80), signing himself 'F. S. A.,' discovered a ballad with the burden 'We will be married o' Sunday,' which words he thinks Petruchio (ii. 1) uses as a quotation, since, 'in fact, that does not appear to have been the day on which he intended to be united to Katherine.'

Several modern critics have agreed in denying Shakspere's authorship of any of the scenes of this play in which Katherine and Petruchio are not introduced. The arguments in support of this view have been recently stated with great ability by Mr. Fleay (in a paper *On the Authorship of the Taming of the Shrew* contributed to the *Transactions* of the new Shakspere Society). They consist in the following. The play is not mentioned by Meres; it is the only play attributed to Shakspere which has an Induction, and the Induction is clumsily managed; it is the only such play in which there is not a duke or king and in which all the characters are taken from the middle class. (Meres, as Mr. Fleay reminds us, mentions *Titus Andronicus;* and this ought, at least in the opinion of those who deny Shakspere's authorship of *Titus Andronicus*, to prove that Meres' knowledge of dramatic authorship was of a loose kind. The *singularity* of the Induction proves nothing. Nor does the absence of the duke or king; the play fulfils the other requirement to which Beaumont and Fletcher allude in the Prologue to *The Woman-Hater:* 'a Duke there is, and the scene lies in Italy, as these two things lightly we never miss.') It is the only comedy attributed to Shakspere which has a regular plot and downright moral; narrow in feeling, restricted in purpose, unpleasing in tone. It was ridiculed by Fletcher in his *Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed;* which will not agree with Mr. Fleay's theory as to Shakspere's co-operation in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and Fletcher's remodelling of *Henry VIII.* All these arguments, as Mr. Fleay allows, are not convincing by themselves; his arguments from metrical peculiarities (lines deficient in various ways, and more than twenty lines in which the first measure consists of one syllable, a phenomenon occurring only twelve times in the other plays), the un-Shaksperean use of Latin quotations and classical allusions, and the use of 120 words (*some Italian*) not



to be found in any other play attributed to Shakspere, are more striking. Upon the whole, the conclusion arrived at may be regarded as very probable, though it is quite unnecessary to push it so far as to deny the possibility of Shakspere having retouched the whole of an earlier play, besides adding scenes of his own.

As to Fletcher's attempt in *The Woman's Prize* to outvie Shakspere on his own ground, see the remarks on that play below.

A Midsummer Night's Dream.

(9) A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. (II a) (10) (F 1) P. 1600. M.

The above data might at least be thought to settle the question as to the time of the composition in one direction. Twice printed in the year 1600, this play was mentioned by Meres in his book, which was published in 1598, and according to Halliwell, 'early' in that year. Yet according to one theory which was adopted by Tieck and which seems acceptable to Ulrici, the play was intended to grace Southampton's wedding, which did not take place till that year, probably towards its close. To escape from this difficulty, Mr. Massey supposes it to have been written for Southampton's wedding indeed, but some years previously, probably in 1595, when the Queen's consent to the marriage was still expected.

On the other hand, two recent German writers on the subject of this play (K. Elze, *Zum Sommernachtstraum* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii, 1868, and H. Kurz, *Zum Sommernachtstraum*, *ib.*, vol. iv, 1869), agreeing in the hypothesis that the play was written for Essex' wedding in 1590, thus fix the date of its composition. Kurz is positive that the play could not have been written after 1590, when Spenser's *Faerie Queene* was published, because the Fairy Queen having here been identified with Elisabeth, it would have been out of the question for Shakspere to represent *his* Fairy Queen as falling in love with Bottom!

A clue to the date has been more usually thought discoverable in the passage in act ii. sc. 1, where Titania describes the disastrous recent state of the weather. This description has been thought to refer to the storms, pestilence, and dearth which befell England in the years 1593 and 1594; but though I cannot with Dyce see anything 'ridiculous' in such a supposition, the coincidence may be purely accidental.

Lastly, the lines in act v. sc. 1—

> 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
> Of learning, late deceas'd in beggary'—

have likewise been interpreted as an immediate allusion, either to Spenser's poem *The Teares of the Muses* (1591) or to his death (which took place in 1599, and is therefore quite out of the question). The term 'ridiculous' is certainly not too strong to characterise a third supposition, that these lines contain a reference to the death of Robert Greene (1592), upon whose memory Shakspere would certainly in that case have been resolved to heap coals of fire.

The general character of the piece allows the supposition that it was written somewhere between 1593 and 1597; the abundance of rhymes and the paucity of feminine endings point to an early date; the construction of the play is likewise slight; yet there is an obvious growth of dramatic power beyond the very earliest period of Shakspere's dramatic productivity. Doubtless the play has features resembling those of a mask; and the performance of the tradesmen may even, if a technical term be desired, be described, as it is by Elze, as an anti-mask. But after all the ingenuity that has been expended on the subject, it cannot be allowed that if the play was written for an occasion, this occasion has been definitively ascertained.

The title of the play has been impugned by Simrock, who (appealing to the authority of Goethe, and his introduction of the *Golden Marriage of Oberon and Titania* as an intermezzo into the *Walpurgisnacht* in *Faust*) argues that the action of the play belongs not to midsummer (as was erroneously deduced from Titania's speech in act ii. sc. 2), but to the eve of Mayday, the night really consecrated to spirits in romantic legend. He has been answered by Kurz.

Various parts and features of this comedy have been traced to various sources. The story of the magic potion and its effects Shakspere may have found in Montemayor's *Diana*, though the translation of this book was not published till 1598. I cannot quite understand whether Klein (*Gesch. des Dramas*, iv. 886) considers Shakspere in any sense indebted to the Italian comedy of the *Intrighi d'Amore*, which has been erroneously attributed to Torquato Tasso.

The idea of the entire machinery of Oberon and his fairy-court was in all probability taken by Shakspere from Greene's *Scottish History of James IV* (1590 *circ.*), described above. The source of the Oberon of the English poets (whose exploits Ben Jonson summarises in a ballad) is the old French popular romance of

Huon and Auberon (*Huon of Bordeaux*, translated by Lord Berners 1579); and Oberon is identical with the *Alberich* (*i.e. elf-king;* cf. for the root *alp* and *albus*) of German popular fiction, and of the *Nibelungenlied.* Oberon reappears in Ben Jonson's mask of *Oberon* (1611), as well as in an earlier play, *Lust's Dominion* (1600). The figure of the elf-queen Shakspere might have found in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* in Chaucer. Her name Titania was, so far as we know, Shakspere's invention, and may have been suggested by Diana, who, as King James I informs us, 'amongst us was called the Phairee;' though Simrock (ii. 344) derives the name from *Titti* (children), the stealing of whom is a favourite pursuit of the elfin spirits. Puck's character was familiar to Englishmen under the name of *Robin Goodfellow*, whose 'Mad Pranks and Merry Jests' fill a book, not indeed, so far as we know, printed till 1628 (republished in *Percy Society's Publ.* vol. ii), but, as Mr. Collier thinks, dating from at least forty years earlier. Cf. as to the appearances of this character in English poetry, Waldron's *Sad Shepherd, Appendix*, p. 133. (The *Robin Goodfellow* of *Wily Beguiled* is a human impostor.) As to the fairy machinery in general, cf. passim, Halliwell's *Illustrations of the Fairy Mythology of Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1845).

The idea of the tradesmen's play was of course suggested to Shakspere by the performances of the guilds with which his native county was specially familiar; but the humorous use to which he put this ancient practice was probably his own. Ben Jonson afterwards copied the device in his mask of *Love's Welcome at Bolsover* (1634). On the other hand, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, though Shakspere might have found it in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, was probably taken by him direct from Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1565–7); just as the figures of Theseus and Hippolyta were more probably taken from North's *Plutarch* (trans. from Amyot by 1579) than from *The Knightes Tale.* A book called *Perymus and Thesbye* was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1563.

It remains to advert to the ingenious hypothesis which has been suggested to explain the well-known passage in act ii. sc. 2— a passage which in the opinion of Delius perfectly explains itself. Already Warburton had considered the passage in question to have a hidden significance, and to refer to the relations between Elisabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, the northern lords her adherents, and the Dauphin. This 'solution' left untouched the allusion

which was afterwards suspected in the imagery of the Siren on the Dolphin to the pageantry exhibited before Queen Elisabeth at Kenilworth, and the supposed allegorical meaning of the 'little western flower.' Mr. Halpin in his *Oberon's Vision &c.*, already quoted in reference to Lyly's *Endymion*, has 'paraphrased' the entire passage, thus:

'*O.* Come hither, Puck. You doubtless remember when, once upon a time, sitting together on a rising ground, or *bray*, by the side of a piece of water, we saw what to us appeared (though to others it might have worn a different semblance) a mermaid sitting on a dolphin's back, and singing so sweetly to the accompaniment of a band of music, placed inside of the artificial dolphin, that one could very well imagine the waves of the magic sea before us would, had they been ruffled, have calmed and settled themselves down to listen to her melody; and, at the same time, there was a flight of artificial fireworks resembling stars, which plunged very strangely out of their natural element down into the water, and, after remaining there a while, rose again into the air, as if wishing to hear once more the sea-maid's music. *P.* I remember such things to have been exhibited amongst the pageantry at Kenilworth Castle, during the Princely Pleasures given on the occasion of Queen Elisabeth's visit in 1575. *O.* You are right. Well, at that very time and place, I (and perhaps a few others of the choicer spirits) could discern a circumstance that was imperceptible to you (and the meaner multitude of guests and visitants): in fact, I saw—wavering in his passion between (Cynthia, or) Queen Elisabeth, and (Tellus, or) the Lady Douglas, Countess of Sheffield, (Endymion, or) the Lord of Leicester [either *alarmed* at the progress of his rival, the Duke of Alençon, with the Queen, or] *all-armed*, in the magnificence of his preparations for storming the heart of his Royal Mistress. He made a predetermined and a well-directed effort for the hand of Elisabeth, the Virgin Queen of England; and presumptuously made such love to her—rash under all the circumstances—as if he fancied that neither she nor any woman in the world could resist his suit; but it was evident to me (and to the rest of the *initiated*) that the ardent Leicester's desperate venture was lost in the pride, prudery, and jealousy of power, which invariably swayed the tide of Elisabeth's passions; and the Virgin Queen finally departed from Kenilworth Castle unshackled with a matrimonial engagement, and as heart-whole as ever. And yet, curious to observe the collateral issues of this amorous preparation, I watched (whatever others may have done) and discovered the person on whom Leicester's irregular passion was secretly fixed: it was fixed upon Lettice, at that time the wife of Walter Earl of Essex, an Englishwoman of rank inferior to the object of his great ambition; who, previous to this unhappy attachment, was not only pure and innocent in conduct, but unblemished also in reputation; after which she became, not only deeply inflamed with a criminal passion, and still more deeply (perhaps) stained with a husband's blood, but the subject, also, of shame and obloquy. Those, however, who pity her weakness, and compassionate her misery, still offer a feeble apology for her conduct, by calling it the result of her husband's voluntary absence, of the waste of affections naturally tender and fond, and of the idleness of a heart that might have been faithful if busied with honest duties, and filled with domestic loves. You cannot mistake, after all I have said. Go—fetch me that flower.'

The theory which is thus clearly enough explained, is supported by the further suggestions that the discovery might have been made by Edward Arden, the head of the house to which Shakspere's mother belonged, that Shakspere attended in his suite at Kenilworth, that Arden's death, due to Leicester, was caused by his having, after scorning to wear the favourite's livery at Kenilworth, traced the adulterer in his secret crime. And the evidence of Lyly's *Endymion*, interpreted with similar ingenuity, is adduced to explain the origin and nature of Leicester's disgrace.

Mr. Massey, too, thought that while the episode of Helena and Hermia contained an allusion to Lady Elisabeth Vernon's jealousy of her cousin Lady Rich, the 'little western flower' signified the Countess of Essex, afterwards married to Leicester, the mother of Lady Rich and the aunt of Elisabeth Vernon.

The temptation to such an exercise of ingenuity as Mr. Halpin's was unusual; for that Lyly loved such mystery-making is certain, and that his *Endymion* has reference to Lord Leicester seems highly probable; while the imagery of the Siren and the Dolphin can hardly but have been connected in Shakspere's mind with the Kenilworth pageantry (of which several accounts might have been before him). But the passage in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* needs no historical interpretation; the allegory suggested by the name and appearance of the flower explains itself; it is *western* because Cupid is shooting in that direction and aiming at the chaste Moon, to which the Siren is in natural antithesis, and because being an *English* flower it is naturally spoken of as growing in that region. At the same time I have little doubt but that the Vestal throning in the west, *i.e.* the Moon, naturally suggested the figure of the Queen so often compared to the chaste Cynthia, and that the antithesis of the Siren was further elaborated by Shakspere in remembrance of the famous pageant at Kenilworth. From this however it is an enormous step to the elaboration of such a historical allegory as Mr. Halpin's, which it would have been unlike Shakspere's practice to attempt, and entirely beyond the power of an ordinary public—and the wish of a Court audience—to follow. There is some truth in Klein's mysterious hint that the flower is the key to the play; for 'love in idleness,' *i.e.* misdirected love, is the subject of its plot, and the text of such moral as it implies. But Mr. Halpin's endeavour is so exceptionally complete in its ingenuity, that I neither liked to pass it by, nor to state its substance in any words but his own, which (if the necessary

historical references are made) fully explain it. And it is by no means impossible that while far from desiring to elaborate a historical allegory, Shakspere may in this famous passage have intended an *allusion* to the passion which in vain sought to overcome the scruples of the Virgin Queen. So much may be allowed, without further accepting the identification of every personage in the allegory, or the nice adjustment of every expression into agreement with an ingenious interpretation. It is precisely where exact personal allegory begins, that true poetic allegory leaves off: the later parts of the *Faerie Queene* may, and in a sense must, be read key in hand, while the earlier suffice with a half-interpretation of their details. And Shakspere as a dramatic poet is singularly free from so perplexing and futile a cleverness as that with which he is in this instance credited by Mr. Halpin. But enough has been said on the subject, as a closer examination of it is not permitted by the nature of this book.

On other passages it seems unnecessary to touch, except that it may be again noted how the humorous device of the perversion of the sense of the Prologue (v. 1) by mispunctuation occurs in much the same way in *Ralph Roister Doister* (for a comic view of Elisabethan interpunctuation see Middleton's *More Dissemblers besides Women*, iii. 2); that several parallel passages have been pointed out to the comedy in the *Sonnets;* and that some of the most charming lines in the play (Helena's speech to Hermia, 'O, is it all forgot?' iii. 2) can hardly be said to bear more than a very general resemblance to a passage in Lyly's *Euphues*, with which they have been compared (Rushton, *Shakespeare's Euphuism*, p. 55).

The *Midsummer Night's Dream* has been altered for the stage unusually often, chiefly in a more or less operatic form. Mendelssohn's overture to this play was composed in 1826, and the rest of the music to it in 1843.

Richard III.

(10) RICHARD III. (II b) (7) (F 2) P. 1597. M.

Dr. Legge's Latin drama of *Richardus Tertius* (acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1583, and mentioned by Sir John Harington in his *Apologie of Poetrie*, 1591; cf. Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, bk. iii) and the English *True Tragedie of Richard III* (1594; both printed in *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1844) have little in common with Shakspere's play. The subject was an extremely popular one on the stage; Ben Jonson produced

a *Richard Crook-back* in 1602, which he did not include in his folio of 1616, probably because he was aided in it by some other dramatist; and the author of a poem called *The Ghost of Richard III* (1614; conjectured by Collier to be Christopher Brooke; see the reprint of the poem in *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1844) speaks of the subject as 'made common in plays.' This poem is founded upon Shakspere's tragedy; and contains a tribute to the poet already noticed (*ante*, p. 277). The popularity of Shakspere's own tragedy as an acting drama is unhappily attested by the publication of the quarto edition, the divergences of which from the folio are one of the worst *cruces* of editors of Shakspere's text (cf. Delius, *Über den ursprünglichen Text des King Richard III* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vii, 1872). A Prologue and Epilogue to *Richard III* (written to 'incourage a young Witty Lad' who played the part) will be found in the *Dramatic Works* of Thomas Heywood (vi. 352–3).

I shall take another opportunity of commenting on the relation of this tragedy to its sources, as illustrating the whole question of Shakspere's relation to the national history. For such a purpose this play seems peculiarly fitted, marking as it does, according to the felicitous expression of Oechelhäuser (*Essay über Richard III* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii, 1868), 'the significant boundary-stone which separates the works of Shakspere's youth from the immortal works of the period of his full splendour.' Its date must be determined accordingly, and can hardly be placed much earlier or later than about 1593. Shakspere's authority in this tragedy was Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577), though he may also have referred to Halle's *Union of the two noble illustrious Families of Lancaster and York* (1542; and continued by Grafton, 1569, from the Wars of the Roses to the end of the reign of Henry VIII). In Holinshed the use of two versions of the career of Richard of Gloucester is perceptible, the one down to the death of Edward IV; in the other, which was that to which Shakspere referred, the Richard as he has become known to popular tradition is exhibited. This view of Richard is traceable, in both Holinshed and Halle, to the influence of Sir Thomas More's *History of Edward V and Richard III*, published (incomplete) in English in 1509. The Latin edition of this work (which is believed to have formed the foundation of the English) has been thought to be written in a style so inferior to the elegant Latinity of More, that it has been conjectured to be the work of Cardinal Morton, Richard's enemy and Henry's chancellor, with whom

More was intimate in his youth. Recently, however, Mr. Gairdner (see Preface to *Letters and Papers illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, vol. ii. pp. xix–xx) has discovered evidence which he deems sufficient to prove the inadmissibility of the supposition of Morton's authorship of the Latin edition; so that the question remains open. The strong Lancastrian partisanship of More's book, from which whole passages were taken *verbatim* by Holinshed and Halle, remains incontestable. (For a brief view of the relations between the historical and the dramatic Gloucester, see R. Pauli, *König Richard III*, in *Aufsätze zur Englischen Geschichte*, 1869.)

I have already noted Cibber's alteration of this tragedy, which still keeps the stage. A *Richard III* by Samuel Rowley, mentioned by Sir Henry Herbert under the date of 1623, is not extant.

King John.

(11) KING JOHN. (II b) (13) (F 2) M.

Malone's attempt to fix the date of this play in 1596 is not regarded with much favour by later editors. He conceived the lamentations of Constance over the death of Arthur (iii. 4) to be perhaps traceable to the death of Shakspere's son Hamnet in August of that year; and Chatillon's praise of the English fleet (ii. 1) to allude to the great fleet fitted out against Spain in the same year. One or two other conjectures of the same kind have been made by other critics. The play evidently belongs to the same period of Shakspere's productivity as *Richard II*, and may be dated about the same time; probably before the body of those in which he mainly followed Holinshed.

The chief source of this play (which in all cases of divergence Shakspere prefers to Holinshed) is *The Troublesome Raigne of King John, &c.*, which appeared anonymously in 1591, and which has been already adverted to (*ante*, p. 124). This play is in two parts; but Shakspere has compressed nearly all its incidents (with the exception of one very judiciously omitted, that of Faulconbridge's 'unmasking of the monastic system,' as it must have seemed to enthusiastically Protestant spectators) into his five acts. The old play was in 1611 published, as a bookseller's speculation, with the initials *W. Sh.*, which in a third edition (1622) duly became *W. Shakespeare*. Bale's *Kyng Johan* (v. *ante*, p. 97) appears to have been unknown both to the author or authors of this play and to Shakspere.

Steevens conjectured a speech of Faulconbridge's (ii. 2) to

have been copied from the play entitled *The famous History of Thomas Stukely*, which was not published till 1605, but was probably acted several years before. Dyce (Introduction to Peele's *Battle of Alcazaar*) thinks this play was perhaps that acted in 1596, which confirms the probability of the supposition.

(12) RICHARD II. (II b) (7) (F 1) P. 1597. M. Richard II.

First printed in 1597, and again in 1598, this play was republished in 1608, and again in 1615, 'with new additions of the Parliament Sceane and the deposing of King Richard.' It undoubtedly belongs to a later period than *Henry VI*, and even ('rhyme-test' notwithstanding) than *Richard III*, and in style seems most nearly to approach *King John*. The date assigned to it by Malone, 1593, can therefore not be far wrong. (See Clark and Wright's edition.)

Shakspere's principal, if not sole, authority in this play was Holinshed, of whom he has been shown (by Clark and Wright) to have used the second edition (published 1586–7). Here and there he may have referred to other sources; a touch in v. 2 is traceable to Halle. R. G. White and Charles Knight have dwelt on several coincidences between this play and Daniel's *Civil Wars*, of which the part referring to the fate of Richard II was published in 1595. But neither Delius, nor Clark and Wright, regard these coincidences as striking; and if Shakspere's play was composed as early as 1593, Daniel may have borrowed from him, instead of *vice versâ*.

An 'exoleta tragoedia de tragica abdicatione Richardi Secundi' was according to Camden acted at the Globe in 1601 on the afternoon before Essex's insurrection, in the presence of Sir Gilly Merick and other of his partisans (the notice in the *State Trials*, according to which this play was called *Henry IV*, seems incorrect); and the only player known for certain to have been concerned in it was Augustine Phillips, one of Shakspere's company. From the nature of the case this could not have been Shakspere's, in which the good-will of the audience is claimed not for the conspirators but for the sovereign. Another play called *Richard II* is reported in Dr. Simon Forman's MS. diary to have been acted at the Globe in 1611; but neither can this have been Shakspere's, as it is stated to have begun with Wat Tyler's insurrection. It may, on the other hand, have been a revival of the old play acted in 1601, which had been performed 'forty times' before it was exhibited at Essex House.

The 'additions' made to the Shaksperean play in 1608 (which consist of lines 154–318 in iv. 1) are generally thought to have been a restoration of what had been omitted at the time of its original production; for the line (321) 'a woeful pageant have we here beheld' appears to refer to the deposition. Mr. Massey's notion that this scene was added 'seditiously' for Essex's purposes is accordingly to be rejected.

Richard II was much altered by Wroughton for representation in 1815, having already undergone the manipulation of Tate, Theobald, and Goodhall.

All's Well that Ends Well.

(13) ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. (II a) (25) (F 1 part; F 3 part[1]) M. (?)

The above *query* is necessary to indicate the difference of opinion which still exists as to the identity of the play mentioned by Meres as *Love's Labour's Won.* For it is under this title that Farmer originally conjectured *All's Well* to be praised by Meres,—a view which is shared by the majority of critics. (Cf. the passage in the epilogue: 'All is well ended if this suit is won.') Others however have thought *The Tempest* and *Much Ado about Nothing* to be referred to; and Hertzberg has recently suggested *The Taming of the Shrew.*

If the prevailing view be accepted, the supposition that the play was produced at a later date than 1598 falls to the ground. The probable date is however much disputed, and is purely a question of internal evidence. Ulrici considers the diction to point to an early date, Hertzberg and Delius to a late; but the general opinion (Collier, Dyce, Gervinus) seems to incline to the assumption that we have in this comedy a later version of an earlier play, which would perhaps allow us to assume a change in title. Both Coleridge and Tieck considered two styles—Shakspere's earlier and his latest—to be discernible in the play. Elze (*Zu Ende Gut, Alles Gut* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vii, 1872) has suggested that the possibility of an allusion to the famous ring given by Elisabeth to Essex on his departure on the Cadiz expedition in 1596 may help to determine the date of the play. The story of the ring is quite apocryphal, and rests upon the authority of the great-granddaughter of Robert Cary Earl of Monmouth, the author of *Memoirs*, and a relative of Queen Elisabeth (see Birch's *Negotia-*

[1] For details see Mr. Fleay's paper on *All's Well that Ends Well* in the Transactions of the new Shakspere Society (vi).



tions, p. 206, *note*). Elze has more appropriately pointed out, as bearing upon the question of date, certain resemblances in the phraseology to *Hamlet*.

The source of the very unpleasing plot of this play is the *Decamerone* (Day iv, Nov. 9), whence the story had been transferred by Paynter into his *Palace of Pleasure* (1566), Nov. 38 of vol. i. From this source the story (*Giletta of Narbona*) is reprinted by Mr. Collier in vol. ii of his *Shakespeare's Library*. Simrock has pointed out the resemblance and the difference between the story as treated by Boccaccio and the *Sakontala* of Kalidasa, where a ring is equally 'fatal' but where the reunion of the consorts is differently contrived. Landau thought that Boccaccio derived the idea of the ring from the *Hecyra* of Terence. The device adopted by Helena also occurs in a Spanish romantic poem about Queen Maria of Aragon.

Boccaccio's story had already served as the basis of an Italian comedy, *Virginia*, by Accolti (1513); and Klein (iv. 557 *seqq.*), who like Simrock points out this fact, discerns 'some meagre features' of Parolles in Ruffo, a character in that play. No English version of the play is known, though of course it might have been brought to England by the Italian actors who were here in 1577-8. This slender suspicion will not be allowed to controvert the general opinion, that the comic characters of *All's Well that Ends Well* are Shákspere's own invention.

(14) THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. (II a) (9) P. 1600. M.

The Merchant of Venice.

This play, twice printed in 1600, by Robertes and Heyes respectively, is the last of Shakspere's comedies mentioned by Meres in 1598; but as the last of the tragedies mentioned by him is the undoubtedly early *Titus Andronicus*, this circumstance is of no importance with reference to its date as compared with those of the other comedies enumerated by the same authority. Henslowe's *Diary* mentions *The Venesyon Comodey* as a '*ne*' play on August 25th, 1594; that this is Shakspere's play seems borne out by the double title of Robertes' entry in the Stationers' Register: *a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyse, otherwise called the Jewe of Venyse*, so that the play might well be known by the local appellation. The passage in v. 1, 'In such a night,' &c., is imitated in an anonymous drama, *Wily Beguiled*, which is mentioned by Nash in 1596,—unless indeed Shakspere should be supposed to have been the imitator. Munday's translation of Silvayn's *Orator*,

which contains a declaration '*of a Jew who would for his debt haue a pound of the flesh of a Christian*' (reprinted in vol. ii of Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*), stated to present some resemblances to the Trial-scene, was published in 1598; but as this work was translated from a French original, the latter might have been accessible to Shakspere at an earlier date. The ballad of *Gernutus a Jewe*, from which he may have derived some hints (printed in Percy's *Reliques*), was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1594, on the day before Marlowe's tragedy of *The Jew of Malta* was entered; but it may be presumed that the latter was the source of the former. Finally, Malone found in a passage in *The Merchant of Venice* (iii. 2: 'He may win, And what is music then,' &c.) a probable allusion to the description of the ceremonies accompanying the coronation of Henry IV of France, which took place in 1594, and was narrated in an English pamphlet *The Order of Ceremonies, &c.*, translated from the French and printed in London. Altogether, there is no proof that the play in its present form has a date of composition later than 1594, though touches may have been here and there added afterwards. *The Merchant of Venice* has many points of resemblance to the comedies obviously belonging to an early period in Shakspere's productivity; frequency of rhymes, occasional doggrel verse, and a tendency to classical allusions; but distinctly exhibits an advance both in power of composition and in beauty of style.

As to the sources of the plot, it can hardly be doubted that Shakspere was indebted both for the story of the bond and for that of the caskets to an earlier play. Gosson in his *School of Abuse* (1579) mentions with approval a play, *The Jew*, 'shown at the Bull,' and 'representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody minds of usurers,'—obviously the same combination as that in the Shaksperean comedy. To what extent both this play and Shakspere were indebted to the same sources for the materials of the double plot cannot of course be decided. Of these—

(1) That of the bond is traceable, as was simultaneously discovered by Farmer, Tyrwhitt, and Lessing, to Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* (written already in 1378, but not printed till 1558), where the story plays in Venice, and where the residence of the lady is called Belmonte. This tale (reprinted with a translation in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii) had been doubtless taken by the Italian author from the *Gesta Romanorum*, the origin of which book has on unsatisfactory evidence been ascribed to a

Poitevin author (see Douce on this supposition of Warton's, in his *Dissertation on the Gesta Romanorum* in *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, vol. ii), but which was very frequently printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was probably German in its origin (*ib.*, p. 353). Though the book in the sixteenth century went through six or seven editions in England, and is by name referred to in 1606 (in a comedy called *Sir Giles Goosecap;* see Morley, *English Writers*, vol. i. part ii. p. 721), it does not appear to have been translated into English till 1703.

The story in the *Gesta Romanorum* is evidently an old Roman law-anecdote; for the circumstance that the same anecdote occurs in Oriental legend is immaterial. As Simrock observes, 'The East has in many forms received reflex impressions from the West, and has taken back, in return for the fictions which it has lent, a rich return of others transplanted thence.' There is therefore no reason to trace this story back, with Benfey, who finds the same origin for the story of the caskets, to Buddhist legends. (Cf. K. Elze, *Zum Kaufmann von Venedig*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi, 1871, p. 152.) The law-anecdote in question connects itself, as Jacob Grimm pointed out, with the old law of the Twelve Tables, according to which the creditor, if payment were not made within a certain term of days, might kill the debtor; and if there were several creditors, they might cut 'the parts, and if they cut more or less, no charge of fraud should lie.' This was already by Gellius interpreted to signify an actual cutting-up of the body; and Niebuhr (*Römische Geschichte*, ii. 670), together with many high authorities on Roman law, accepts the literal interpretation. I confess however that I cannot help following Schwegler (*Römische Geschichte*, iii. 38) in understanding this clause to refer to the *sectio bonorum*, or division of property under auction, only. Whichever may have been the intention of the decemvirs, it is clear how the expression was understood in later times. Thus the *Gesta* appropriately connected the legal principle in question with the daughter of a Roman emperor, while a variety of mediaeval legends, which it is impossible to pursue, gave their versions of the anecdote. The elements of the substitution of one friend for the other, and the Jewish nationality of the usurer, were added by the Italian novelist, together with the disguise of the lady of Belmonte and the device of the ring. In making the usurer a Jew, Shakspere followed his authorities, and was undoubtedly influenced by the example of Marlowe's play; as to the points of resemblance between which

and *The Merchant of Venice*, v. *ante*, p. 188. It will not be forgotten that usury was a sin by the law of the Church, and was prohibited under Edward VI. Jews, it may be added, were not legally tolerated in England under Elisabeth; but I should not be inclined to deduce from this fact the conclusion, either that Shakspere derived his notion of the Jewish character from travels abroad, or that he developed it out of his internal consciousness.

The love and elopement of Jessica and Lorenzo, which belong to this part of the plot, were traced by Dunlop to a novellino by Masuccio; but they may have been derived by Shakspere from the play mentioned by Gosson (cf. Drake, ii. 387).

(2) The story of the caskets Shakspere or the author of the old play found in another passage of the *Gesta Romanorum*, or in a translation of portions of the *Gesta* by Robert Robinson, published in 1577. (See Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii.) It is to be found in the mediaeval romance of *Balaam and Josaphat*, which, written in Greek by Joannes Damascenus about 800, circulated in a Latin version before the thirteenth century. It was retold by Vincent de Beauvais in his *Speculum Historiale*, and occurs again in the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine, of which an English translation was printed in 1527. The story in Boccaccio's *Decamerone* (x. 1) and in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (bk. v) has only a vague resemblance to that of the caskets (cf. Clark and Wright's edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, Introduction, pp. x–xi). The legend of the caskets may have an oriental origin; and Benfey has discovered an Indian tale bearing a certain resemblance to it. But what all these early versions of the story alone have in common with that of the *Gesta*, is in point of fact the machinery of boxes or caskets, and the general moral that outward appearances are deceptive.

Much more might be said of the sources of the stories interwoven in the plot of the *Merchant of Venice;* but I will only add that it need hardly be pointed out that there is nothing historical in the background upon which it is enacted. If Sultan Solyman is mentioned as reigning at the time, and if Antonio's argosy was bound to the Indies, the sea-route to which was only discovered towards the end of the fifteenth century, these circumstances do not tie down the action of the play to the beginning of the sixteenth. Portia's review of her suitors (i. 2) is very much in the fashion of the court of Elisabeth, and Gervinus has pointed out a similar comparison of foreign national characters in Sully's

Memoirs; the 'County Palatine' (*ib.*) is supposed to allude to a Polish Count Palatine who caused a sensation in London in the year 1583, till he disappeared in a cloud of debt; other allusions in the same scene are referred to Shakspere's own contemporaries; and the jokes of Launcelot Gobbo are of English home-growth, like those of his kinsman Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona;* 'angels' (ii. 8) were an English, not an Italian coin, just as the woollen bagpipe (iv. 1) is a Scotch and not a Venetian instrument.

(15) ROMEO AND JULIET. (II a) (12) (F 1) P. 1597. M. Romeo and Juliet.

This play was published in 1597, with the statement that it had been 'often (with great applause) plaid publiquely by the right honourable Lord Hunsdon his servants.' Henry Lord Hunsdon, who held the office of Lord Chamberlain at his death, died on July 22, 1596; his son, George Lord Hunsdon, was not appointed Chamberlain till April 1597, the office being held in the interval by Lord Cobham. Since it can be shown to have been usual to mention the title of the office, as the more honourable designation of its holder's 'servants,' in other of Shakspere's plays, the result seems to be well established that the date of the production of *Romeo and Juliet* falls between July 1596 and April 1597. From a passage in Marston's *Satires* it appears that the public place where this play was performed was the Curtain Theatre. (Malone.)

The Nurse's mention of the earthquake as having occurred eleven years ago (i. 3) has been thought to fix the date at which this passage at all events was written; for there actually was an earthquake *in England* on April 6, 1580. On the other hand, Mr. Hunter supposed the allusion to be to an earthquake which took place *near Verona*, and destroyed Ferrara, in 1570. On the former and more probable theory Shakspere was writing *Romeo and Juliet* as early as 1591, which is by no means improbable, as the style and versification are those of the poet's more youthful period. There are considerable variations between the quarto editions of 1597 and 1599; but these are regarded by Tycho Mommsen, in his justly celebrated edition of the play, as due to the incompetence of the compiler of the first edition. This does not exclude the possibility that changes were in some instances introduced by the author himself, who, as there seems every reason to believe, bestowed much and repeated labour upon this drama.

Mr. Massey's exceeding ingenuity has discovered in the Nurse's

difficulty about the first letter in Romeo's name (iv. 2) a reference to (Henry) *Wri*othesley Earl of Southampton, to the prevention of whose marriage with Elisabeth Vernon he supposes the action of the play to allude. This would tally with the ascertained date of its production.

The materials for this play Shakspere found both in Arthur Brooke's poem, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562; reprinted in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii), which he more especially followed, and in Bandello's novel (referred to by Brooke) printed in 1554, translated into French by Boisteau in his *Histoires Tragiques*, and from the French into English in the second volume of Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1567). (This is also reprinted by Collier.)

In the Preface to his poem Brooke states: 'I saw the same argument lately set foorth on stage with more commandation then I can looke for, being there much better set forth then I have, or can doe.' I can hardly see why, because the play is nowhere else mentioned, Brooke should be supposed to have used the expression 'set forth on stage' in a figurative sense. Klein (v. 423) conjectures the play referred to to have been an imitation of Groto's Italian tragedy of *Hadriana*, which would seem to have been written before 1550. It was probably founded on Luigi da Porto, and the play may certainly have been the foundation of that referred to by Brooke, which Shakspere also may have seen. The resemblance between a passage in the *Hadriana* and a wondrously beautiful scene in the Shaksperean play (iii. 5) seems to me more striking than Delius is willing to admit.

For before Bandello, Luigi da Porto had in 1524 composed a novel on the subject—the only one which remains from his hand; he appeals to no better authority than the oral communication of a Veronese archer named Pellegrino, who in his turn appeals to that of his father, but doubts the historical veracity of the story, inasmuch as he had read in old chronicles that the families of the Capelletti and Montecchi had always belonged to the same party. This is borne out by a passage in Dante, *Purgatorio*, vi. 106; and Dante makes no mention of the story of the lovers. The story was treated between Luigi da Porto and Bandello by Gherardo Boldiero, who wrote under the name of Clizia, in a poem in Ottave rima (1553). But it was from Bandello that the story found its way into 'history,' being narrated by Girolamo della Corte in his *Istoria di Verona* (1594). The historical spuriousness of the story

is stated to have been finally established by Professor Giuseppe Todeschini in his edition of the *Lettere Storichi* of *da Porto* (1857). But, as visitors to Verona are aware, the belief in the historical truth of the story is still cherished there, by cicerones at all events; and Romeo's grave and Juliet's balcony (four storeys high) will probably long continue to attract the sympathetic pilgrimages of devout credulity.

According to a still earlier novelist, Masaccio Salernitano, who published a novel on the subject in 1476, a quite similar event happened in Siena. Indeed Douce pursued the story still further back, and traced the episode of the sleeping-potion and the burial of the lady to the Middle-Greek romance of Xenophon Ephesius. General resemblances have been pointed out by Simrock to the stories of Pyramus and Thisbe, Hero and Leander, Tristram and Isolde, and to reproductions in old German ballads. This list could doubtless be largely increased; for the course of true love has not run smooth for many centuries. On the other hand, Bandello's novel, as Mr. Halliwell points out, was made use of by Lope de Vega in his play of *Los Castelvines y Monteses*, of which the date is before 1604 (cf. Klein, x. 341, who thinks Shakspere must have been acquainted with Lope's piece); and another Spanish play, *Los Vardos de Verona*, treats the same subject. The old German *Tragoedia von Romio und Julietta*, acted in (probably South) Germany in 1626 (as well as probably a Dutch piece on the same subject, 1634), is a mere version of Shakspere's play. (It is printed by Cohn, *u. s.*, pp. 304 *seqq.*) Goethe's unfortunate operatic version of *Romeo and Juliet* (1811) has already been noticed as a singular aberration. A modern Italian tragedy, *Giulietta e Romeo*, by Cesare della Valle (1826), seems based on Bandello (Klein, vii. 529, *note*). It has been thought that Shakspere owed the idea of the comic element in the character of the Nurse to Marlowe and Nash's *Dido;* and to Marlowe he can hardly be denied to have owed the suggestion of a most splendid poetic passage in the play (vide *ante*, p. 194, *note*). Parallel passages have been pointed out in the *Sonnets*, the composition of many of which may have been contemporaneous with that of *Romeo and Juliet.*

The lines 'When griping grief,' &c., quoted by Peter (iv. 5), are from Edwards' song, *In Commendation of Musicke*, contributed to the *Paradise of Dainty Deuises.* (See Warton, *History of English Poetry*, sec. i, ii, *note.*) The ballad which, as Peter states in the

same scene, his 'heart itself' plays, has been reprinted in the *Shakesp. Soc. Papers* (vol. i. pp. 13–14).

Henry IV.

(16) HENRY IV. PART I. (II b) (13) (F 2) P. 1598. M.
(17) HENRY IV. PART II. (II b) (14) (F 2) P. 1600. M.

The *Second*, as well as the *First*, *Part* of *Henry IV* was written previously to the date of the entry of the *First* in February 1598. This is proved by the fact that this entry makes mention of 'the conceipted Mirth of Sir John Falstaffe,' while in one passage of the quarto edition of the *Second Part*, '*Old.*' *i.e. Oldcastle*, is by mistake left standing as the prefix to one of Falstaff's speeches. Moreover, there is an allusion to 'Justice Silence' in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599). Both the plays were therefore written in 1597, or perhaps slightly earlier.

The general authority for the matter of these plays is Holinshed, who is followed even in his mistakes, the two Edmund Mortimers, uncle and nephew, being rolled into one. Shakspere also made use of the old play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (cf. *ante*, p. 123), which contains the chief incidents of these plays as well as of *Henry V.* It was certainly acted before 1588, and is in prose.

It was in this play that Shakspere found a Sir John Oldcastle as one of Henry's companions, and the hero of a robbery-scene, but otherwise undistinguished from the rest of the prince's boon-companions by any characteristics of his own. That the personage whom he invented and who was to become immortal under the name of Falstaff, originally bore the name of Oldcastle, is abundantly proved. In *Part I*, act i. sc. 2, Prince Henry calls Falstaff 'my old lad of the castle,'—a pun on the original name of the character. In *Part II*, act iii. sc. 2, Falstaff is said to have been in his boyhood 'page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,' which the historical Oldcastle actually was. Lastly, as already noticed, the abbreviation *Old.* in the quarto of 1600 was left standing by mistake at the beginning of one of Falstaff's speeches.

As an allusion occurs in Field's *Amends for Ladies* (1618) to 'the play where the fat knight, hight *Oldcastle*,' told 'truly what this honour was' (cf. *Part I*, v. 2), and as there are two other similar allusions to the character under its old name in works dating 1604, it is conjectured that some of the theatres retained this old name after it had been altered by the author.

The reason why Shakspere made this alteration is quite clear. Shakspere was not aware, when he took over the name and personage of Sir John Oldcastle, that this was the 'Lollard martyr,' known more generally under his title of Lord Cobham, who, after being condemned for heresy in 1413, escaped from prison, and (a Lollard riot having taken place in London early in 1414) was pursued, and finally—in 1417—seized and burnt to death. The Catholics must have hailed the supposed representation of this historical personage under the character of the old sinner of Shakspere's play with considerable satisfaction; Father Parsons, about 1603, speaks of Oldcastle as 'the ruffian knight, as all England knows, commonly brought in by the commediants on their stage;' and even Dr. Lingard seems to betray a touch of regret in noting that 'it was afterwards thought proper to withdraw him from the drama, and to supply his place with the facetious knight, who still treads the stage under the name of Sir John Falstaff.' (*History of England*, vol. iii. chap. vi, *note*.)

It can hardly be doubted that Shakspere changed the name, because he had had no intention of casting ridicule upon the historical personage in question. This is implied by the well-known passage in the Epilogue to *Part II*: 'For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man.' In the tragedy of *Sir John Oldcastle, Part I*, confidently, but as has been stated above (p. 237), quite erroneously, ascribed to Shakspere by Schlegel, and certainly later in date than *Henry IV, Part I*, the Prologue evidently refers to this unlucky misrepresentation of its hero:

> 'It is no pampered glutton we present,
> Nor aged counsellor to youthful sin,
> But one whose virtue shone above the rest,
> A valiant martyr, and a virtuous peer,' &c.

This view of the origin of the character of Falstaff seems incontestable, and has been developed by Mr. Halliwell in his *Character of Sir John Falstaff, as originally exhibited by Shakespeare*, 1841. There remains however the question: why, on giving up the name of Oldcastle, did Shakspere adopt that of Falstaff, thereby in fact remedying one injustice by another?

Shakspere must have wished to substitute a more appropriate name for Oldcastle's: but unfortunately he was not content with inventing one. In the historical personage of Sir John Fastolf he thought to have discovered a coward whose name could not be taken in vain; but there seems every reason for believing that the

accusation brought against this knight for want of courage in the French campaigns of the time of Henry VI rested on no solid foundation. But the popular view had been already taken in the *First Part* of *Henry VI* (iii. 2 and iv. 1); and Shakspere was led to identify the name of Fastolf with the notion of a cowardly knight by the circumstance that Sir John Fastolf, like the Oldcastle for whose name his was substituted, was a Lollard. This curious circumstance has been first pointed out by Mr. Gairdner (see *The Historical Element in Shakspere's Falstaff*, in *Fortnightly Review*, March 1873). Fastolf, though a brave man, did not live on good terms with his generation; and his will shows him, on the evidence of an allusion in it to a text (1 *Corinth.* xiv. 38) very much in use among the Lollards, to have had leanings to their doctrines. It is perhaps not more than a coincidence, that Sir John Fastolf, as appears from the *Paston Letters*, owned a house called the Boar's Head Tavern, not however in Eastcheap, but in Southwark. The character of Ancient Pistol has been compared by Klein (viii. 916) to the Centurio in Rojas' *Celestina*, the first specimen on the Spanish stage of one of its favourite comic types, and (ix. 979) to the Soldado in Fernandez' farsa of that name. The former was not translated into English till 1631; but Klein thinks Shakspere might have seen the French or the Italian translation.

Of the two Parts of *Henry IV*—blended into a single play—a very old MS., certainly transcribed before 1644, and probably at a very much earlier date, was discovered among the papers of the Dering family, and has been published for the *Shakespeare Society* by Mr. Halliwell (1845).

Kenrick's *Falstaff's Wedding* (published in 1760; and first acted at Drury Lane in 1766; see Geneste, v. 95) is the only instance with which I am acquainted of an attempt to 'continue' a Shaksperean play, or part of one. In the Preface however the author speaks of 'the remarkable ill success of preceding imitators of Shakespeare.' His own imitation (which was approved by Garrick) is not absolutely unsuccessful; while his reading is shown by the gathering of Shaksperean phrases of which much of his dialogue consists, I really think he shows some original humour in passages of the Falstaffian speeches. Nor is the plot contrived without ingenious boldness; the likeness in unlikeness to the opening of *Henry V* being managed with some amount of inventive power. Of course, however, as a whole the attempt is a failure; and the author, inconsistently with the general appro-

priateness of his form in verse as well as in prose, has put into the mouth of one of his characters, Father Paul, a diction which is that not of Shakspere, but of Dr. Johnson.

(18) HENRY V. (II b) (16) (F 2) P. 1600. Henry V.

This play closely connects itself in every way with the two preceding dramas; and was doubtless composed soon after them. Its sources too are the same, *viz.* Holinshed and *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, unquestionably acted before 1588, though not entered till 1594. It is to this play, and not to Shakspere's, that Nash alludes in his *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592), when speaking of 'Henry V represented on the stage, leading the French king prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin sweare fealtie;' for this incident is not in Shakspere. As *Henry V* is not mentioned by Meres, it was probably produced in 1599; and this is borne out by the reference in the *Chorus* to act v. to Essex's expedition to Ireland, which took place in the summer of that year.

It has been pointed out to me by Mr. Ainger, that the Dauphin's mention of a sonnet written by him in praise of his horse, and beginning 'Wonder of Nature,' and Orleans' retort that he remembered a sonnet which began so 'to one's mistress,' may be a playful allusion to Constable's sonnet beginning 'Miracle of the world' (quoted by Warton). Shakspere's supposed satire of other sonnet-writers has been made the basis of a theory in connexion with the object of some of his own Sonnets.

The Choruses and the Epilogue are wanting in the quarto editions of this play; and it is therefore open to doubt whether in their otherwise mutilated text we have an imperfect copy of the play as it was originally written, or whether it was at first produced by Shakspere substantially in its present form.

Lord Orrery's *Henry V* (acted 1664, published 1668), a play in rhyme and containing an original love-plot (both Henry V and Owen Tudor are in love with the Princess Katharine), is stated by Geneste (i. 53) not to have the slightest resemblance to Shakspere, except in the historical part of it. Hill's *Henry V, or the Conquest of France by the English* (acted 1723), is founded on Shakspere; but there are many alterations, and a new character is introduced, that of Harriet the niece of Lord Scroop, whom Henry is said to have seduced and deserted. (Geneste, ii. 129–

131.) I shall have something to say on the treatment of history in this play below.

As You Like It.

(19) AS YOU LIKE IT. (II c) (15) (F 2) E. 1600 (?).

The entry of this comedy in the Stationers' Register lacks the date of the year, but the previous entry has that of 1600; and the other plays entered with *As You Like It*, and accompanied by the same *caveat* 'to be staied' against other printers, were published in that year. (Malone.) The next entry bears date 1603, before which year *As You Like It* was therefore at all events produced. Other indications of the date of the play have been sought in certain passages. Rosalind's saying 'I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain' (iv. 1), is thought by Malone to allude to the alabaster image of Diana, mentioned by Stowe as set up in 1598, and by the same writer in the second edition of the same book (*Survey of London*) as decayed in 1603. At the same time, as Delius points out, Stowe's description of this statue does not precisely correspond to Rosalind's allusion, as in the former water is said to 'prill' from the breast of the figure. A line is quoted (iii. 5) from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, which is not known to have been published till 1598. Marlowe is in this passage alluded to as a 'dead shepherd;' he had died in 1593. 'The book' by which Touchstone professes to regulate his quarrels, and from which he appears to derive his nice distinctions as to the nature of lies (v. 4), is conjectured to be *Vincentio Saviolo his Practice* (bk. ii: *Of Honor and honorable Quarrels*), published in 1595. 'Books of good manners' (*ib.*) have been noticed by Mr. Halliwell of an earlier date, *viz. The Boke Intytled Good Maners* (1507); *The Boke of Nurture, or Schoole of Good Maners, &c.* (1577); and *Galateo, or a treatise of the maners and behaviours, &c.* (translated from the Italian 1576), as well as a fourth of the same date as the last.

The date of the composition of this play may accordingly with tolerable confidence be ascribed to the year 1599, which accords with the general internal evidence of style. Klein (x. 106) notices the similarity in subject between *As You Like It* and Lope's *Las Flores de Don Juan.*

The book from which the story of this play was taken is, as has been already noticed, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde, Euphues' Golden Legacie, found after his death in his cell at Silexdra. Bequeathed to Philautus' sonnes nursed up with their father in England* (1598).

Lodge took part of his plot, but by no means the whole of it, or indeed the characters and incidents which give a pastoral character to his romance, from the *Tale of Gamelyn*, erroneously included under the name of *The Coke's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. That Shakspere made direct use of this original authority has indeed been suggested by Knight and others, but without satisfactory proof. The names of his characters were either borrowed from Lodge, or suggested by his names. Rosader however was changed into Orlando, with a father Rowland and a brother Oliver. (Cf. Delius, *Lodge's Rosalynde und Shakespeare's As You Like It*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi, 1871, where an analytical comparison of novel and play is given. The novel is reprinted in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. i.)

The title of the play was thought by Tieck to have been chosen in allusion to the concluding line of Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*:

'By — 'tis good, and if you like't you may;'

but Jonson's comedy was first acted in 1600, and there would have been no very deep satire in the adoption of the phrase in any case. As Simrock surmises, it was more probably suggested by the short address with which Lodge's tale begins: 'If you like it, so; and yes I will be yours in duty, if you will be mine in favour.' On this kind of titles, as employed by Shakspere, I shall make some more general observations below.

The idea of the famous passage 'All the world's a stage' &c. (ii. 7) is traced by Staunton to the apophthegm of Petronius, 'Totus mundus agit histrionem,' which is said to have been the motto over the Globe theatre. He adds, that in some Greek verses attributed to Solon, introduced by Philo Judaeus into his *Liber de Mundi opificio*, the life of man is separated into ten ages of seven years each; and that similar distributions are made by other authors—Greek, Roman, and Hebrew; while in a miscellaneous collection of the fifteenth century called *Arnold's Chronicle* is a chapter entitled 'The vij ages of man living in the world,' and pictorial illustrations of the same kind of idea were frequent in the Middle Ages, as well as broadsides and ballads on the subject. See particularly the emblem from Boissard's *Theatrum Vitae Humanae* (Metz, 1596), reproduced in H. Green's *Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers*, p. 405, with much illustrative learning on the subject; and the representation of the Seven Ages from a block-print in the British Museum, *ib.* p. 407, some figures in which

curiously correspond to the 'parts' enumerated by Jaques. Shakspere repeats the general idea in several other passages; and I have noticed the comparison of the world to a stage as twice occurring in the works of Ralegh; once in his lines *De Morte* and again in the Preface to his *History of the World.* Cf. also Chapman's *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (i. 1); Dekker's *Northward Hoe* (i. 1); Thos. Heywood's *The Author to his Booke,* prefixed to his *Apology for Actors;* Ben Jonson's *New Inn* (i. 1: 'all the world's a play'), and doubtless many other parallel passages. The line, twice repeated in *Locrine,* 'All our life is but a tragedy,' has a different sense. In Wilson's *Andronicus Comnenius* (v. 4) a song is introduced beginning :—

> 'Some have called life a stage-play, that includes
> Nothing but scenes and interludes.'

The allusion to 'Gargantua's mouth' (iii. 2) need not necessarily have been derived from Rabelais, of whom no English translation existed in Shakspere's time; but there is evidence that a chap-book about Gargantua was popular in England in the sixteenth century.

Much Ado about Nothing.

(20) MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING. (II c) (17) (F 2) P. 1600.

This play had been 'sunderie times publikely acted' when it was entered on the Stationers' Register; but there is no evidence to cause its composition to be much ante-dated to its publication. The view according to which it was referred to by Meres in 1598 has been already noticed (*ante,* p. 388).

The plot of the serious part of this comedy is to be found in a novel of Bandello's (i. 22), which was translated into French in Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques &c.* (1594). Bandello, but hardly Shakspere, may have been acquainted with Ariosto's version of the first part of the story. (The *Orlando Furioso,* where it occurs in Bk. v, was published in a translation by Harington in 1591.) Spenser reproduced Ariosto's story in the *Faerie Queene* (Bk. ii. canto iv. stanzas 17 *seqq.*); and the same episode had been according to Harington versified by George Turberville (probably in his *Tragical Tales out of sundrie Italians,* 1587). A novel in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* turns on a similar trick.

Shakspere may have had an earlier play on the subject before him; for an *Ariodante and Geneuora,* which must of course have

been based on Ariosto, is mentioned as acted in the presence of Queen Elisabeth in 1582–3. The old German play of *The Beautiful Phoenicia*, by Jacob Ayrer (partly printed by Cohn, *u. s.*, pp. 76 *seqq.*), was founded on Bandello, probably in Belleforest's translation or one of its German imitations; but it has several points in common with *Much Ado about Nothing* which are wanting in the novel, and which indicate some intermediate source (cf. Cohn, pp. lxxi *seqq.*). The resemblance between Benedick and Beatrice on the one hand, and the clown John and his Anna Maria on the other, is the reverse of striking,—indeed the characters are of a very different class; but the introduction of the comic couple, with the discomfiture of the lover, is a remarkable coincidence between the two plays, and certainly points to a common source apart from Bandello. The circumstance is additionally significant from the fact that the hero of Duke Henry Julius of Brunswick's comedy of *Vincentius Ladislaus* (printed 1594) 'is in reality what Beatrice wanted to make Benedick appear' (Cohn, p. xlvi), and actually causes his servant to 'set up his bills,' as Beatrice humorously asserts Benedick to have done. As the date of Ayrer's piece is not known—it may have been written before or after 1600—and as that of Shakspere's is similarly uncertain, it is impossible to decide as to their relative priority. That however Ayrer did not copy from Shakspere seems, as Simrock points out, clear from the names of the characters in his play, which follow Bandello, while Shakspere has changed all the names except those of Don Pedro and old Leonato. But whether Shakspere invented Benedick and Beatrice, or conceived them from an account of Ayrer's play, or with Ayrer and Duke Henry Julius derived them from some previous piece, is a question which will hardly affect our view as to the originality of these incomparably delightful characters.

H. Brown, and according to him Hunter, believe the humours of Benedick to allude to W. Herbert's (Lord Pembroke) unwillingness to marry.

Dogberry with his 'mistaking words' and the rest of the 'substantial watch' may be alluded to, with other plays, in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*. Cf. for the satirical treatment of the watch Lyly's *Endimion* (*ante*, p. 164), Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, Fletcher's *Love's Cure* (where, however, the satire is of an intensified kind), the same author's *Knight of Malta*, and above all Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable* and Glapthorne's *Wit in a Constable* (v. 1).

Twelfth Night.

(21) TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL. (II c) (28) (F 1 part; F 2 part). Acted 1602.

This rests on the evidence of the MS. diary of John Manningham, discovered by Mr. Hunter (see his *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, vol. i. pp. 365 *seqq.*), who states that he saw *Twelfth Night* performed at the Middle Temple, on February 2, 1602. As Meres makes no mention of it, it may be assumed to have been composed between 1598 and 1602; and Steevens thought 'the new map with the augmentation of the Indies' mentioned by Maria (iii. 2) to allude to the map engraved for the English translation of Linschoten's *Voyages*, published in 1598. The play has been thought to be referred to in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), act iii. sc. 1, which would still more closely fix the date, but this seems very doubtful. If the scene in which Malvolio is treated as possessed be really, as Hunter supposes, in allusion to the Puritan practice of exorcism exposed in 1599 by Harsnet's tract *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practices of John Darrel*, this is a further indication of the date of the play. (See Hunter, *New Illustrations*, vol. i. pp. 380 *seqq.*; and his attempt, not very convincing, to explain the crux of 'the lady of the *Strachy*' (ii. 5) as an allusion to the same source.)

Manningham thought this play 'much like the Commedy of Errors or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like to that in Italian called *Inganni*.' The resemblance to the *Menaechmi* is of course only of the most general kind. Of the three Italian plays bearing the name of, or a similar name to, that cited by Manningham, one, *Gli Ingannati* (by an unknown author; cf. Klein, iv. 748 *note*), seems to have been produced some time after 1527, was printed under the title of *Il Sacrifizio* in 1537, and translated into French by François Juste under the title of *Les Abusés* in 1543. Rueda's *Comedia de los Engaños* appears to be directly founded on *Gli Ingannati* (Klein, ix. 158). With the story of this play the novel of Bandello (ii. 36), first published in 1554, and reproduced of course in Belleforest's French *Histoires Tragiques* (1594), is stated to accord more closely than with the novel in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1565), which again was followed more closely than Bandello's in Barnabe Rich's *Historie of Apollonius and Silla* in his *Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581; another reprinted, from the edition of 1606, in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii). Another Italian comedy, *Gl' Inganni*,

by Secco, printed in 1562 (cf. Klein, iv. 792, 801 *seqq.*), seems based upon the former. Montemayor in his *Diana* (1542) is variously thought to have taken the main elements of his *Filismena* from Cinthio and Bandello; but their novels were published after the drama. A third Italian comedy with the same name, in which the lady in disguise moreover assumes the name Cesare (cf. Cesario in Shakspere), is mentioned by Hunter, as written by Curzio Gonzaga and printed in 1592. The locality of Illyria occurs in Montemayor and in Cinthio; and in the novel of the latter occurs the *shipwreck*.

Directly, or more probably indirectly through some English translated piece, Shakspere may therefore have been acquainted with one or more of these comedies, more particularly the earliest, which is even thought to have suggested one or two of the names and (in a phrase in the Preface: 'la notte di Beffana,') one of the titles of this piece. Yet the substance of the story he probably derived from Rich's version; and more weight has probably been attached to Manningham's remark than it deserved. According to Klein (iv. 806), who has compared the first and second of the Italian comedies enumerated with *Twelfth Night*, Shakspere's play, with the exception of one or two touches of a doubtful character, furnishes no reason for assuming any demonstrable borrowing from either of them, not to speak of a 'most like' resemblance.

Cf. *ante*, as to the sources of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

The inimitable comic characters of this play (Malvolio, according to Charles Lamb's view of the character, need not be included among them) appear to be Shakspere's own creations, and are doubtless of native growth.

Of the songs introduced into this play, all seem to be Shakspere's; but that of which the Clown and Sir Toby alternately recite part, 'Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone,' is a quotation from the *Golden Garland of Princely Delights*, and is printed in Percy's *Reliques*, under the title of *Corydon's Farewell to Phillis*. Of the references to popular ballads thickly given by Sir Toby (ii. 3), it is stated that 'Peg-a-Ramsey' is only known as a title; that 'Three merry men are we' is the burden of several old songs; and (Warton, *History of English Poetry*, sec. lii, *note*) that 'There dwelt a man in Babylon' is the beginning of an old ballad *Of the godly and constante wyfe Susanna*, licensed in 1564, on the subject of which there is also a play. The 'very true' sonnet 'Please one, and please all,' quoted by Malvolio (iii. 4), is

printed at length by Staunton, from a recently discovered copy. The burden of the concluding 'jig' of the Clown is the same as that of a snatch of a ballad sung by the Fool in *King Lear* (iii. 2). It is usual on the stage to introduce as the 'catch' (ii. 3) a delectable ditty, 'Which is the properest day to drink,' of which I am unacquainted with the origin. 'Mistress Mall,' whose 'picture' is mentioned i. 3, was a historical character of Shakspere's day, or rather a historical personage without a character, who 'died in 1659, and is stated to have left twenty pounds by her will for the Fleet-street conduit to run with wine when King Charles II returned, which happened soon after.' (Staunton.)

It will be observed that the second title of this play, '*What You Will*,' is also that of a comedy by Marston.

The Merry Wives of Windsor.

(22) THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR. (II c) (19) (F 2) [First Version, P. 1602.]

Mr. Halliwell thinks that the composition of this play may be dated as early as 1592. Not only had Queen Elisabeth (for whose delectation the play, according to the tradition heard by both Dennis and Rowe, is said to have been produced) masques and tournaments at Windsor Castle in January 1593, but it was in 1592 that Windsor (to which the play had so many local allusions) was visited by a real German duke (cf. iv. 3), *viz.* Duke Frederick of Württemberg and Teck, to the account of whose travels Mr. Charles Knight directed attention in connexion with the allusion in *The Merry Wives*. Cohn has pointed out (p. xix) that the Duke during his visit to England, according to the diary kept by his secretary, went to the Globe theatre and saw *The Moor of Venice* acted.

The quarto of 1602 differs in many respects from the folio; in the later form of the play there are several allusions which seem to show that they were introduced in the reign of King James, before whom the comedy is stated to have been acted in November 1604. Mrs. Page's remark (ii. 1) seems to allude to James's wholesale creation of knights in 1604; and in the amended play Falstaff says to Shallow (i. 1): 'You'll complain of me to the *King*' (instead of '*council*,' as in the quarto). From a comparison of the characters, Mr. Halliwell has arrived at the conclusion that 'the two Parts of *Henry IV*, like *The Merry Wives*, originally existed in an unfinished state, and that, when

the first sketch of *The Merry Wives* was written, those plays had *not* been altered and amended in the form in which they have come down to us.' This conjecture helps to explain the discrepancies in the minor characters, while it leaves the dissimilarity in Falstaff, such as it is (and I agree with Mr. Halliwell that it is not of the essence of the character), to be accounted for by the tradition as to Queen Elisabeth's wish to see him in love.

The date of the legend of Herne the Hunter is unknown; but Mr. Halliwell found a 'Rycharde Herne, yeoman,' among the hunters who were examined and 'confessed' for hunting in the royal forests in the time of Henry VIII.

The source of the plot of *The Merry Wives* is thought to be a story in Tarlton's *Newes out of Purgatorie*, taken from a novel by Straparola in his *Notte piacevoli*. Here are not only identities of incident, but even of expression. Malone also directed attention to *The Fishwife's Tale of Brainford* in *Westward for Smelts* (1620; though Steevens mentions an edition of 1603, apparently erroneously), of which the scene is laid at Windsor. Finally, a tale in Giovanni Fiorentino's *Pecorone*, translated into English under the title of *The Fortunate, the Deceived, and the Unfortunate Lovers* (1632) is also noted as similar.

A full examination of this play will be found in Halliwell's reprint of *The First Sketch of the Merry Wives* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1842), where Straparola's novel and Tarlton's version are also given at length. The latter is also reprinted in vol. ii of Collier's *Shakspeare's Library*. It was in John Dennis' version of this comedy, entitled *The Comical Gallant* (1702), that the story of Queen Elisabeth having ordered it to be written was first mentioned. Rowe in 1709 added that she wished to see Falstaff 'in love.'

The ballad of *Lady Greensleeves*, the tune of which Mrs. Ford (ii. 1) contrasts with that of the Hundredth Psalm, appeared in the *Handfull of Pleasant Delites* (1584), and has been reprinted by Fairholt (*Songs and Poems on Costume, Percy Soc. Publ.*, vol. xxvii), and by Mr. Robert Bell in his *Early Ballads, &c.* (1861).

(23) MEASURE FOR MEASURE. (III) (21) (F 3). Acted at Whitehall 1604. Measure for Measure.

This play, as noted above, was acted at Whitehall on December 26, 1604; and Tyrwhitt and Malone have conjectured two

passages in it (i. 1 and ii. 4) to contain 'a courtly apology for King James I's stately and ungracious demeanour on his entry into England.' I should be inclined to accept this conjecture, the more so that there is something in the sentiment of these passages not ill according with the tendency towards shrinking from an unnecessary publicity, which we may fairly suppose to have been an element in the poet's own character.

The plot of the piece is taken from the prose narrative of *The rare Historie of Promos and Cassandra*, inserted by Whetstone in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582; reprinted in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii), and doubtless Shakspere had also read the play of the same author on the same subject, described above (p. 118). Whetstone had taken the story from the *Hecatommithi* of Giraldi Cinthio (ii. 3, 5), who himself dramatised it in a play called *Epitia*, described by Klein (v. 353) as not having even a phrase in common with Shakspere's play in addition to the main features of the plot. Cinthio probably founded his story on some historical anecdote; a number of such were mentioned by Douce and Dunlop, one connecting itself with Charles the Bold, another with Lewis XI and his favourite Olivier le Dain. One of Belleforest's novels, though described by him as his own invention, resembles Cinthio's in subject. Simrock has adduced other anecdotes of the same kind from Italian and Hungarian romance, and one related of the Emperor Otto in Grimm's *Deutsche Sagen* (ii. 169), on which he thinks Cinthio's novel was perhaps founded. The main incident of the plot is one which unhappily must have recurred more than once in history; and it is well known that the notorious Colonel Kirke was accused of a similar atrocity. (See Macaulay's *History of England*, chap. v, where it is said that 'as Kirke was not the first, so he was not the last, to whom this excess of cruelty was imputed.')

As Whetstone diverged from Cinthio in at least one important point (for the original of Andrugio—Shakspere's Claudio—is actually put to death), so Shakspere introduces changes from Whetstone, among them the device that the Duke is present throughout in disguise, so that thus the happy conclusion of the piece is prepared. He likewise contrives, by the introduction of the character of Mariana, to preserve the honour of the heroine, without decreasing the moral guilt of Angelo. The conclusion of the piece proves that he was acquainted with the novel of Whetstone; that he had read the play is very probable; whether he had read

the Italian novel, which Whetstone in general closely follows, is a question of no interest. (Cf. Simrock, i. 153.)

The beautiful song ('Take, O, take those lips away') in iv. 1 recurs in Fletcher's *Bloody Brother* (v. 2) with slight variations and the addition of a second stanza. The authorship of the song is doubtful; but the music to it was composed by one Jack Wilson, who belonged to Shakspere's company. Both stanzas are ascribed to Shakspere in an edition of his poems printed in 1640. This is thought to be the only instance in which a doubt can be raised as to Shakspere's authorship of a song (other than a mere scrap or 'foot' of a popular ballad) introduced by him into any of his plays. (See R. Bell's *Songs from the Dramatists*, p. 95 *note;* with a reference to Collier in *Shakesp. Soc. Papers*, ii. 33; and cf. Dyce's *Works* of Beaumont and Fletcher, x. 459.)

Among the Shakespeares who were prayed for by the brothers and sisters of the Guild of St. Anne of Knowle, was a Prioress Isabella. This coincidence, for it can hardly be more, is pointed out by Mr. Grant White, *Memoirs*, p. 7.

(24) HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK. (III) (18) (F 3) P. 1604. Hamlet.

The Revenge of Hamlett Prince of Denmark, as yt was latelie acted by the Lord Chamberlayn his servantes, was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1602; but it remains uncertain whether this was the quarto—the earliest edition we possess of the play—actually printed in 1603. This first edition, according to the view of Collier and Dyce, was a compilation by some incompetent hand of the text of Shakspere's tragedy as we have it in the quarto of 1604; according to Knight an earlier Shaksperean work, of which the quarto of 1604 was therefore not only a different version, but one in which the differences were owing to revision by the author himself. In the earlier quarto, of which only two copies are in existence, the character called Polonius in 1604 is called Corambis, and Reynaldo is called Montano; and there is a difference, such as a compiler could hardly have hit upon, in the order of some of the scenes. Delius generally accepts this view, so far as it involves the hypothesis of two versions of Hamlet by Shakspere himself, but cannot ascribe the condition of the text of the first quarto to the mere fact of its being an early Shaksperean sketch. Tycho Mommsen (who thinks Corambis a mistake of the

compiler's for the abbreviation *Cor*=courtier, and Montano for *man, i. e.* Polonius' man or servant) considers nothing that distinguishes the first from the second quarto to be owing to Shakspere himself, while, on the other hand, Staunton regards the first quarto as substantially 'the poet's first conception.' Messrs. Clark and Wright (in the *Clarendon Press Series* edition, 1872) arrive at the conclusion that 'there was an old play on the story of Hamlet, some portions of which are still preserved in the quarto of 1603: that about the year 1602 Shakespeare took this and began to remodel it for the stage, as he had done with other plays: that the quarto of 1603 represents the play after it had been retouched by him to a certain extent, but before his alterations were complete: and that in the quarto of 1604 we have for the first time the *Hamlet* of Shakspere.' In view of the thoroughly mutilated condition of the text of 1603, I have therefore above stated the play to have been first printed in 1604; but it is clear that a *Hamlet* on which Shakspere had been at work was acted at least as early as 1602.

The *Hamlet* out of the adaptation of which Shakspere's masterpiece thus grew, was probably that which is mentioned by Henslowe as acted (not apparently as a new play) already in 1594. An allusion to 'the visard of the ghost which cried so miserably at ye theator, *Hamlet, reuenge,*' occurs in a tract by Lodge (*Wits Miserie, and the World's Madnesse*) in 1596. But already in Nash's *Epistle* prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589 or even earlier, 'whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls of tragical speaches,' are mentioned among incompetent 'indeuors of art.' A German play on the subject, called *Der bestrafte Brudermord* (Fratricide Punished), or *Prinz Hamlet aus Dännemark*, was acted in Germany, about the year 1603, by English players; in this play Corambus corresponds to Polonius. (Printed in Cohn, *u. s.*, pp. 236 *seqq.*, also in R. G. Latham's *Two Dissertations on the Hamlet of Saxo-Grammaticus and of Shakespear*, 1872.) In this play the name of Hamlet's uncle is Eric, as in the tale of *Argentile and Cuaran* in Warner's *Albion's England;* which circumstance Dr. Latham attributes to the possible existence at that time of some *Gesta Erici* (or *Eorici*) *Regis*, and which I mention as accounting for the origin of the name of Shakspere's *Yorick*, which others have explained to be from Rorick (the name of Hamlet's grandfather on the mother's side in Saxo-Grammaticus!), or from the Danish form of George. The German play may with much

probability be assumed to represent the old English *Hamlet.* Who was the author of this is unknown; but there is no improbability in the conjecture that it was Thomas Kyd, whose *Spanish Tragedy*, as has been seen, contains the device of the play within the play and otherwise resembles *Hamlet* in the plot. The Prologue too (as reproduced in the German play) seems in his manner.

As there is no reason to assume the play alluded to already in 1589 to have been by Shakspere himself, I have not complicated this statement by any reference to such a possibility. Malone at one time assumed from a MS. note by Gabriel Harvey, in which he mentions *Hamlet* as a performance with which he was well acquainted, that Shakspere's *Hamlet* was written prior to 1598; but he afterwards found that this was only the date at which Harvey purchased the volume where he made the note, which therefore he might have made, Malone afterwards thought, as late as 1600. This limit he considered fixed by the allusion to the 'inhibition' of the players 'by the meanes of the late innovation' —which he referred to the Order in Council of June 1600—in ii. 2; but the order in question was not carried out, though complaints were made with a view of enforcing it as late as December 31, 1601. (Collier, *H. of D. P.*, i. 315.) Thus the allusion, even were this its explanation, might have been made as late as 1602; nor did Harvey die till many years afterwards. Messrs. Clark and Wright, noting that the passage in question appears for the first time in the quarto of 1604, consider the 'innovation' to refer to the licence given on January 30, 1604, to the Children of the Queen's Revels to play at the Blackfriars Theatre. The 'children' are mentioned in the quarto of 1603, and again in the First Folio; and the word 'inhibition' would thus not have to be interpreted in a literal sense.

It remains briefly to notice the source whence the author of the old *Hamlet*, and probably through him Shakspere, derived the materials for his plot. This source was doubtless the *Historie of Hamblet*, which had been translated (though no edition earlier than 1608 exists; printed in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. i) from Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (vol. v, 1570). The novel diverges from the drama in the later parts of the story, but appears to contain its general outlines of the plot and one coincidence of detail (Hamlet's exclamation 'A rat! a rat!' on becoming aware of 'the counsellor' behind the arras). The names in the novel differ from

those in Shakspere in every case except those of Hamlet himself and his mother 'Geruth.'

Belleforest's novel was derived from the *Historia Danica* of Saxo-Grammaticus, who lived in Denmark during the latter part of the twelfth century, and began his history after 1177. Dr. Latham, who has subjected those parts of it which bear on the subject to a careful analysis, has arrived at the conclusion that 'there are two Hamlets, and Shakespear's is *not* the real one. Shakespear's Hamlet, as far as he is any one at all, is Offa; but the personality of Offa himself, so far as he is Offa at all, is of a very equivocal character. His is made up of the odds and ends of tralaticious absurdities, of general, rather than particular appropriation; so that the bearer of it is a lay-figure rather than a real man in the flesh. Out of this and the like come *bi*-personalities, and *semi*-personalities which, after all, end in mere *quasi-personalities;* and a *quasi*-personality is all that can be claimed for Shakespear's Hamlet, or the Amlethus of the Third Book [of Saxo]. The Amlethus of the Fourth Book, the Hamlet who is Chochilaicus, can do more. He may pronounce himself the representative of a genuine hero. It is possible, however, that, by the mere force of genius, the equivocal Hamlet who is identified with Shakespear has in the hearts and the imaginations of men the most reality.' What is especially to be noticed is, that in Saxo-Grammaticus there is no indication of any other than a feigned madness in Amlethus (Book iii); and so in the translation of Belleforest Hamblet 'counterfeits the mad man.' Belleforest already dwelt upon the similarity in this device to that adopted by Brutus and by David; but, as Simrock observes, the latter is hardly a case in point. There is a faint resemblance, of which I venture to think far too much has been made, to Havelok's assumption of simplicity in the *Lay of Havelok*, which reappears in several chronicles, and was from Caxton's edition of the *Brut* adapted by Warner as the tale of *Argentile and Cuaron* in his *Albion's England.* (Reprinted in Percy's *Reliques.* The *Lay of Havelok the Dane* has been edited by Mr. Skeat for the *Extra Series* of the *Early English Text Society*, 1868.)

So much for the 'historical' Hamlet, whose 'grave' by-the-bye may still be seen on the green slopes at Elsinore. In Saxo-Grammaticus may also be recognised the germs of Horatio, Polonius, and Ophelia,—even of Rosencranz and Guildenstern. Goethe is said to have entertained the notion of treating the



subject of Hamlet 'freely after Saxo-Grammaticus.' For the rest, Professor Angelo de Gubernatis is stated (*Saturday Review*, January 18, 1873) to have satisfied himself that 'almost every name with which Hamlet is connected is the subject of myths common to most or all branches of the Aryan race . . . and that the incidents are found in many other stories of mythical heroes.' Hamlet has of course been more especially compared with Orestes; and Simrock has dwelt on the mythical significance of Hamlet's journey to England (the land beyond the ocean) as compared with Brutus' journey to Delphi. The Icelandic saga of Brian is said to agree in its main features with Saxo's narrative.

To return to the play: the device of the play within the play might have been copied from *The Spanish Tragedy*, if this was antecedent in date to the old *Hamlet*. In a play called *A Warning for fair Women* (before 1590), it is stated that a woman who had murdered her husband confessed after seeing such a murder represented on the stage. It must be supposed from Hamlet's statement that the play is 'the image of a murder done in Vienna' &c. (iii. 2) that a drama or novel existed on the subject; but none has been discovered.

In Mr. R. French's *Shakspereana Genealogica* (p. 301 *seqq.*) will be found a complete key to the supposed allegorical significance of Shakspere's *Tragedy*. 'Nearly all its personages are in one way or other connected with the history of Sir Philip Sidney, who seems by common consent to stand for "young Hamlet."' Lord Burleigh is of course Polonius; but there is a deeper mystery in the statement that 'the usurping Claudius of the drama has been regarded as a satire on the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, *not of course with reference to crime*.'

'Hercules and his load' (no other than the Globe itself) in ii. 2 was the sign of the Globe Theatre. The three stanzas sung by the Grave-digger (v. 1) are a version of a song in *Tottel's Miscellany* said to have been written by Lord Vaux, and printed in Percy's *Reliques*.

The soliloquy of Hamlet (iii. 1) may recall ideas in Montaigne (i. 19); but, as Elze points out (*Jahrbuch*, vol. vii. p. 33), there cannot be any question of appropriation in this and similar passages. It has been over-ingeniously suggested by Professor Seeley, that the 'some sixteen or dozen lines' which Hamlet (ii. 2) requests the actors to insert in the play, are to be found in

the speech of the Player King (iii. 2; vv. 177–185; 200–203). (See Mr. Furnivall's letter in *The Academy*, January 3, 1874.)

On the resemblances to *Hamlet* in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, and the possible reminiscence of the hero in Chapman's *A Humorous Day's Mirth*, see the remarks on those plays, *infra*.

'*The Grave-makers, out of Hamlet*,' is one of the 'drolls' acted during the suppression of the theatres, and printed in Kirkman's *The Wits* (1672). It is the only one taken from Shakspere in the collection.

Macbeth.

(25) MACBETH. (III) (26) (F 3). Acted 1610.

This play (which Messrs. Clark and Wright and Mr. Fleay hold to be not pure Shakspere, but interpolated by Middleton) was certainly acted at the Globe on April 20, 1610, when it was witnessed by Dr. Simon Forman, who describes it in his MS. diary. Malone's attempt to fix the date of its first production in 1606 is unsatisfactory (the evidence being two supposed allusions, to the state of the corn-market, and to Father Garnet's equivocation in his trial for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, in the Porter's speech, ii. 3); on the other hand, there is much force in Collier's observation that the evident allusion to King James in the passage

> 'Some I see
> That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry' (iv. 1)

would have had little point if delivered more than seven years after his accession. A small occasional piece on the subject of Macbeth was played before the King at Oxford in 1605; it was in Latin, and was repeated before the Queen in English. It certainly seems probable that Shakspere's *Macbeth* was first produced soon after James I's accession; but there is no proof on the subject. The fable about the King's autograph letter of thanks and the absence of all evidence that Shakspere was ever in Scotland have been already noticed. The date of Middleton's *Witch* being quite unknown, and the probability being small that Shakspere borrowed from it (while it is possible—see Clark and Wright's Introduction—that Middleton 'refashioned' parts of *Macbeth* itself, as we have it at present), the question of the date of *Macbeth* seems unaffected by that of the relation between the two plays. Ben Jonson's *Mask of Queens* (1609) may have owed something to both. The scene in which Banquo's Ghost appears was evidently known to Beau-

mont and Fletcher when writing *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, of which the probable date is 1611. (See Jasper's speech, v. 1.)

Shakspere derived his materials from Holinshed, who found the story of Macbeth in Bellenden's English translation (1536) of the Latin *Historia Scotorum* of Hector Boece (1526). In this narrative (which may be read in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii) all the incidents of which the action of Shakspere's play consists are to be found in the same order; nothing, as Gervinus says, was wanting for the dramatic treatment of the subject except its psychological developement. Even Lady Macbeth seems to have been suggested by another passage in Holinshed—the murder of King Duffe by Donwald at Fores,—from which Shakspere took many of the details of the murder of Duncan. But the sleep-walking scene was of course his own invention. A metrical version of the story occurs in Wyntoun's *Chronicle of Scotland* (1400 *circ.*). See Ellis's *Specimens*, vol. i. p. 246. J. Grimm, quoted by Simrock, is reminded by Lady Macbeth of Tanaguil, who, like Eve, incites her husband to high things. Grimm also compares the old German story of King Grunewald, where however the female tempter is a daughter instead of a wife. The untimely birth of Macduff is shown by Simrock to be a feature which in Germanic mythology invariably indicates heroic strength. (Mr. Cox, in his *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, i. 312, compares Asklepios and Dionysos, Sigurd and Tristram, as 'sons of sorrow' 'born to do great things.') Halliwell adduces parallel instances to the notion of the moving wood. (Another has been found in Arab tradition, said to date from the times before Mohammed. See *The Academy*, February 28, 1874.) The incident of Banquo's Ghost, on the other hand, is apparently Shakspere's own invention. Some of the details connected with the Witches seem due, in the case both of *Macbeth* and of Middleton's *Witch*, to Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584).

Buchanan, of whose *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (Edinburgh, 1528) no English translation existed in Shakspere's time, while refusing to believe the marvellous parts of the story, and considering them *theatris aut Milesiis fabulis aptiora quam historiae*, rationalistically accounts for some of them. As to the real history of the war with Macbeth, see Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. ii. Note X; and compare as to the historical Macbeth a paper in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd S., x, September 15, 1866.

Macbeth, reproduced with additions and 'amendments' by

D'Avenant in 1674 (some of the alterations being taken from Middleton's *Witch*), was quoted in this form in *The Tatler*. Some of D'Avenant's interpolated choruses are still in use on the stage.

Schiller's fine version of *Macbeth*, in which however the characteristic features of the Witches are entirely changed, was produced in 1804.

[I regret that the superb new *variorum* edition of *Macbeth*, published in 1873 by Mr. Furness, should have reached me too late to allow me to do more than refer to it. The same remark applies to Mr. Furness' edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, published in the same year.]

King Lear.

(26) KING LEAR. (III) (24) (F 3). Acted 1606. P. 1608.

With regard to the date of this tragedy, we know that it was acted at Whitehall upon St. Stephen's night (December 26), 1606, 'before the king's majesty by his majesty's servants, playing usually at the Globe upon the Bankside;' that it was entered on the Stationers' Register on November 26, 1607, and actually printed in 1608. That it was not written in its present form before 1603, is proved by the passage (iii. 4) where Edgar calls upon the devils in names apparently taken from a tract by Harsnet entitled *Discovery of Popish Impostors*, printed in that year.

In 1605, probably in consequence of the renewed popularity which the subject had derived from Shakspere's play, was republished *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Thre Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordelia*, upon which Shakspere's tragedy was founded. This play (reprinted in Steevens' *Six Old Plays, &c.*) was first entered for publication on the Stationers' Register in 1594, and probably printed soon afterwards; it was certainly acted by Henslowe's company on April 6, 1593. This play contains the whole outline of the story of King Lear and his three daughters, but the episode of Gloster and his two sons is wholly absent, nor are there any characters to correspond to Gloster and his two sons, or to the Fool. In the old play Lear is accompanied throughout his misfortunes by the faithful Perillus, who corresponds to Shakspere's Kent, but who has not been banished. Again, in the old play Lear does not go mad; but after Regan has attempted to make away with him by an assassin, Lear and Perillus prevail upon the man to spare their lives, and they escape to France, where they are kindly received by Cordella and



her husband. An invasion of Britain follows, and Lear is restored to the throne, the play thus ending happily, and very differently from Shakspere's tragedy. The old play moreover contains a comic character, the French nobleman Mumford (Montfort), who is not in any way necessary to the action of the plot, the progress of which he only interrupts by the sallies of his barren wit. The only point in which the preference might be given to the old play is the opening, in which the conduct of the daughters is perhaps more naturally accounted for than in Shakspere. Gonorill and Ragan are informed of the proposed action of their father beforehand, whereas Cordella is taken by surprise; which furnishes an additional reason for the difference in their respective answers. In general, the old play is in diction of the poorest and baldest character, and to a large extent in rhyme. There is no possibility of its being by Shakspere. (Cf. *ante*, p. 125.)

The author of the old play doubtless derived his materials from Holinshed, if not directly from Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle upon which Holinshed based his narrative. Geoffrey again may have derived the story from an old Welsh chronicle ascribed to Bishop Tyrsilios (seventh century); but he was doubtless acquainted with the *Gesta Romanorum*, where the hero of an identical story is the Emperor Theodosius. The story of King Lear was retold in the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, and in that of Hardyng. With slight variations of expression it reappears in the story of Ina, King of the West-Saxons, published in Camden's *Remains* (1605), after the production of Shakspere's tragedy. Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* (ii. 10. 27–32) narrates the story of King Lear in the chronicle of 'Briton Kings from Brute to Uther's ragne' which Prince Arthur reads in the House of Temperance; the story here takes the same end as in the old plays, and the reply of Cordelia has the same variation as in all the earlier sources from the form which it receives in Shakspere. From Spenser Shakspere seems to have taken nothing except perhaps the precise form of Cordelia's name. Higgins in the fourth edition of *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1587; reprinted in vol. ii. of Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*) and Warner in his *Albion's England* likewise versified the subject; but Shakspere owes nothing to them. A ballad of *The Death of King Leir and his three Daughters* (printed by Percy), which introduces the madness, was on the other hand doubtless of a later date than Shakspere's tragedy; the author of it had apparently looked into Holinshed. The idea of the division

of the King's lands is to be found in *Gorboduc;* it is of course derived from the Œdipodean story. The beginning of *Locrine* in this respect resembles that of *King Lear*. Professor Angelo de Gubernatis has discovered King Lear 'in embryo' in the Indian legends of Dîrghatamas and Yayâtis (see a review of his *Zoological Mythology*, 1872, in *Saturday Review*, January 18, 1873). The main features of the story are familiar to old Germanic, as well as to other groups of, legend.

The episode of Gloster and his two sons was taken by Shakspere from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (bk. ii), which appeared in 1590, where the King of Paphlagonia corresponds to Gloster. (The episode is reprinted by Collier, *u. s.*) Simrock dwells on the resemblance between the relation of Edmund to the two wicked daughters and Livy's narrative concerning the daughters of Servius Tullius.

Othello.

(27) OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE. (III) (23) (F 3).

According to internal evidence of character and manner there can be no difficulty in assigning to this play a date not far removed from those of *Macbeth* and *Lear*—a conclusion fairly supported by the 'tests' of versification. No trustworthy external evidence exists as to the date of *Othello*, unless importance be attached to the circumstance, noted by Mr. Halliwell, that a passage in a MS. dated 1600 (*The Newe Metamorphosis*, by J. M.) very closely resembles the well-known lines beginning 'Who steals my purse, steals trash.'

The story of *Othello* (but not the name) occurs in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (i. 3. 7), of which a French translation by Chappuys had appeared in 1584. (The Italian story, with a late English version (1795), is reprinted by Collier in his *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii.) According to Steevens the names of both Othello and Iago occur in a story in *God's Revenge against Adultery*, which, according to Mr. Halliwell, was published as an addition to Reynolds' *Triumphs of God's Revenge against Murder*, in the sixth edition of that book, 1679. An Italian ballad is stated to exist which contains the same names, but in which otherwise no resemblance is to be traced. Rawdon Brown (cited by Simrock) suggested that Shakspere received the story from the personal communications of the Venetian embassy which visited London 1613–16; but the date of the play makes this impossible. But the statement extracted by R. Brown from the diaries of Marino

Sanuto, according to which Cristofalo Moro was lieutenant of Cyprus for Venice in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and returned from the island in 1508, *because he had lost his wife*, points to a historical foundation of the story, with which Shakspere undoubtedly became acquainted through Cinthio or a translation of that author.

The indefatigable Klein (v. 385) has pointed out resemblances of detail, as well as a striking likeness to the great scene in which Othello's mind is poisoned by Iago, in L. Dolce's *Marianna* (1565), which play was imitated by a French tragedian, to whom again Voltaire is stated to have been indebted.

The burden of Desdemona's willow-song (iv. 3) is the same as that of a ballad by John Heywood (see *Shakesp. Soc. Papers*, vol. i. p. 44); the ballad itself is however another, which is reprinted in Percy's *Reliques*, the sex of the singer being here male. In Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*, reference seems to be made to this ballad (i. 1: 'Shall Camillo then sing Willow, willow, willow'). In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (iv. 1) the jailor's daughter in her madness is said to sing 'nothing but "Willow, willow, willow."' Cf. also Massinger's *The Maid of Honour* (iv. 5 and v. 1). Another song called *The Willow-Garland*, attributed to Edwards, is noted by Warton, *History of English Poetry*, sec. lii, *note*. Iago's verses about King Stephen are from an old ballad also reprinted by Percy; and the same legend is referred to by Greene in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*.

(28) TIMON OF ATHENS. (III) (32). †

Timon of Athens.

This play was not printed till the First Folio; a circumstance which lends weight to the assumption, in which most critics of the present day agree, that we have in it an older play partially rewritten by Shakspere (see in particular Delius, *Über Shakspeare's Timon of Athens*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. ii, 1867, summarised in his edition of Shakspere; Knight in *The Pictorial Shakspere;* Staunton; —Tschischwitz, *Timon von Athen*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iv, 1869, seeks to show that the play is an original work of Shakspere's which was altered afterwards, perhaps after his death, by another hand). Adopting this assumption, we may consider it probable that Shakspere's part of the work belongs to his late years (Rapp, *Englisches Theater*, aptly compares the date of Molière's *Misanthrope*, written in his forty-third year); and in that case it might be the earlier play to which allusions have been discovered in *Jack*

Drum's Entertainment (1601) and in Guilpin's *Skialetheia* (1598), though these allusions are in fact only to the character, and may not refer to a play at all.

Knight considers act i. sc. 1 (from the entrance of Apemantus), sc. 2, act iii. sc. 1, 2, 3 (perhaps 4), 5, 6 (except the speech 'May you a better feast'), act iv. 2 (the conclusion), 3 (part), act v. sc. 1 (beginning), and most of sc. 3, 4 un-Shaksperean. Delius seems generally to agree with these conclusions; for his detailed analysis of the play see the *Jahrbuch, u. s.* He has since conjectured the author of the earlier play to have been George Wilkins, the author of the novel of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, and as he thinks, of the play which Shakspere adapted in his drama of that name. (*Vide infra.*) The main source of the play was doubtless the novel *Of the strange and beastly nature of Timon of Athens, enemy to mankind, with his death, burial, and epitaph*, in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (i. 28), (1566), together with a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, in Sir Thomas North's translation from Amyot's French version (1579). In addition to these sources he might be supposed to have referred to Lucian's Dialogue of *Timon*, were it not that no English, or even French translation of Lucian is known to have existed at the time. Latin and Italian translations existed (cf. Tschischwitz, *u. s.*, p. 196). Tschischwitz insists on the character of Timon in Shakspere according with Lucian's rather than Plutarch's conception of it; p. 194).

Another play on the subject of *Timon* was in existence in MS. about the year 1600. Mr. Dyce (who has edited it for the *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1842) considers that it was evidently intended for the amusement of an academic audience, and though probably acted, never performed in London. It might therefore well be doubted whether Shakspere was ever acquainted with it, though it contains a banquet-scene which might be thought to have suggested iv. 6 (the 'stones' mentioned at the end of the scene in Shakspere are only thrown in the academical comedy, in Shakspere Timon throws dishes), and the story of Timon's being possessed of great sums of gold which he had dug up in the woods, which comes from Lucian.

The conclusion seems inevitable, that directly or indirectly Shakspere, or the author of the play which he is held to have adapted, must have been acquainted with Lucian's Dialogue. (Bojardo's *Timone*, mentioned *ante*, p. 129, was founded on this.) Thomas Heywood's Dialogue of *Misanthropos, or the Man-hater* (a

versified translation of Lucian), was published in 1637. (See his *Dramatic Works*, vol. vi.)

(29) PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE. (I) Acted 1607 or 1608. E. 1608. P. 1609. † Pericles.

Entered by one bookseller (Blount) in 1608, this play was published by another (Gosson) in 1609. It was not included by Hemynge and Condell in the folio of 1623, nor in consequence was it printed in that of 1632, but it appeared in those of 1663 and 1685.

The play as it stands is no doubt founded substantially upon Laurence Twine's *Patterne of painefull Adventures: Containing the most excellent, pleasant and variable Historie of the strange accidents that befell unto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife, and Tharsia his daughter* (1607; reprinted by Collier in his *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. i). Twine's story is stated to have been merely a reprint of the English translation of the French version (by Robert Copland) of the story of Apollonius, which English translation had already been printed in 1510 by Wynkyn de Worde and reprinted in 1576 by William Howe. It was taken originally from the *Gesta Romanorum*, in which appeared one of three known Latin versions of the story, which was originally written in Greek, about the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era, but it is not known by what author. Godfrey of Viterbo versified it in his *Pantheon* (in the latter half of the twelfth century), and from this source it was adopted by Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*, completed before 1332. (It had been three times printed before the reign of Elisabeth.) The author of our play was doubtless acquainted with Gower's poem; for Gower is introduced as 'Chorus,' and the metre of the passages spoken by him is that of the *Confessio*. But Gower is not the main source of the play, the action of which frequently diverges from his narrative.

The romance of *Apollonius of Tyre* was extremely popular in the Middle Ages; there are several German versions of it, and the German popular book on the subject agrees with that which was re-edited by Laurence Twine.

In contravention of the opinion formerly held by some critics—and supported by Dryden's probably loose assertion (in the Prologue to Charles D'Avenant's first play, *Circe*) that

'Shakespeare's own Muse her Pericles first bore,
The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor'—

that in *Pericles* we have a work of Shakspere's earliest period, the general tendency of modern criticism is to regard it as not wholly Shakspere's, but as another author's play and added to by him. Coleridge considered *Pericles* an apt illustration of the way in which Shakspere handled a piece which he had to refit for representation: 'At first he proceeded with indifference, only now and then troubling himself to put in a thought or an image, but as he advanced he interested himself in his employment, and the last two acts are entirely his.' (Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, vol. i. p. 310.) Drake and Hallam held similar views.

The whole subject of the authorship of this play has been treated with great fulness and distinctness by Delius in an essay on the subject in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii (1868). He points out that the play in the title-page of the edition of 1609 is called 'the late and much admired,' that it directs special attention to the birth and life of Mariana, that 'William Shakespeare's' name receives great prominence. From the first of these facts it seems allowable to draw the conclusion that the play had been only recently produced; the solitary piece of evidence to the contrary being a note of 'spangled hose in Pericles' among the theatrical dresses mentioned by Edward Alleyn at a probably earlier date (see Collier's *Memoirs of E. Alleyn*, p. 21). The 'spangled hose' correspond to Twine's description of the hero's wedding-dress. As to the popularity of the play, we have abundant evidence. Was it originally Shakspere's?

It would certainly be unaccountable, had the play been substantially his, that so popular a piece (it was repeatedly published in quarto) should not have been included by Hemynge and Condell in their folio. And internal evidence supports the view that Shakspere merely adapted a play, the epical construction of which made recasting difficult, without contributing any important additions of his own except the passages, beginning with the third act, having reference to Mariana.

Who, then, was the author of the original drama, and the inventor of the tolerably clumsy machinery of Gower's 'choral' (of course the term is a misnomer) speeches? As Delius has demonstrated, there is great probability in supposing the author to have been George Wilkins, of whose life nothing is known, but of

whom one tragedy, *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* (1608), resembling *Timon* and *Pericles* in more than one respect, remains. (It will be briefly noticed below.) (He is also said to have co-operated with Day and Rowley in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers, Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, and Sir Robert Shirley;* and was the author of a pamphlet called (he seems to have been as fond of 'triads' as Ulrich von Hutten) *Three Miseries of Barbary, &c.*) This George Wilkins in 1608 published a novel entitled *The Painfull Aduentures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Being the True History of Pericles as it was lately presented* ['presenter' is the proper term for a personage employed as Gower is in *Pericles;* cf. 'Rumour the Presenter' in the Folio of *Henry IV, Part II,* Induction] *by the worthy and ancient Poet John Gower.* This novel (which gives the figure of Gower as a frontispiece, and in the Preface begs the reader to receive the 'Historie' in the same manner as it was 'by the King's Maiesties Players excellently presented') enumerates all the personages of the story after the fashion of a drama, and all with precisely the same names as those in the play.

It is accordingly conjectured by Delius, that Wilkins had already composed the play of *Pericles* with the aid of Twine's novel and of the *Confessio Amantis*, when Shakspere resolved to adapt it for the use of the King's players, who acted it in 1607 or 1608 under his, as the more attractive, name. It was so popular that it was entered for printing in 1608 by one bookseller, and actually published from a mutilated and probably surreptitiously obtained copy in 1609 by another. Wilkins, who had relinquished his rights of authorship in the play, printed the play's version as a novel, in order that the 'poore infant of his braine,' as he calls the book in the dedication, might be associated with its real father. Otherwise it would be necessary to suppose him to have been guilty of a monstrous plagiarism, and one which he could hardly have hoped to palm off upon his readers.

This conjecture has considerable probability; and it can only be hoped that the unhappy Wilkins (whom Delius also supposes to have been the author of the original *Timon of Athens*) received some substantial recognition of his labours from the King's players when they appropriated his play. Were it otherwise, he might have consoled himself with the fact that what fell from his into Shakspere's hands was a production which even Shakspere's genius was unable to improve into dramatic excellence.

The popularity of the play bore late fruits of a doubtful character in Lillo's adaptation *Marina* (1738).

The name of *Pericles* was probably taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*. That the form *Pyrocles* in which the name there occurs was the original one of the play is proved by an epigram by Richard Flecknoe (1670), *On the Play of the Life of Pyrocles*.

For a full discussion of the 'emblem-book' references in a particular passage of this play (ii. 2) see H. Green, *Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers*, chap. v.

Julius Caesar.

(30) JULIUS CAESAR. (III) (27) (F 4).

While this tragedy may safely be assigned in the date of its composition to the first decade of the seventeenth century, there seem no sufficient grounds for following Malone in fixing the year 1607 as the date of its original production. As it is hardly possible but to suppose a scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* to have been written with a knowledge of Shakspere's *Julius Caesar*, and as the date of the former play seems to be 1611 or earlier, that of *Caesar* may be safely placed somewhere before this. Malone's conjecture is however founded on the fact that in 1607 was printed in London a play on the same subject by William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Sterline, which had been already printed in Scotland in 1604. There is no proof that Shakspere was indebted to this author for either the idea or any of the details of his play. That the idea had long previously been in Shakspere's mind, seems probable from the frequent allusions to the story and character of Julius Caesar in his earlier plays.

It would indeed be strange if the most famous death in profane history had not from the very first attracted the notice of our dramatists. On the 1st of February 1562, a fortnight after the production of *Gorboduc*, a *Julyus Sesar* was brought upon the stage (*vide ante*, p. 113); and in 1579 Stephen Gosson mentions '*Caesar and Pompey*' as one of the subjects treated by contemporary dramatists. A Latin play upon the death of Caesar, by Dr. Richard Eedes, was acted at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1582. And there is an anonymous play entitled *The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey, or Caesar's Revenge*, of which, according to Craik (*The English of Shakespeare illustrated in a Philological Commentary on his Julius Caesar*, fourth edition, 1869), two editions,

one of 1607, one probably earlier, have come down to us. Chapman's play of the same title was not printed till 1631. Sterline's has been already mentioned. So popular was the subject, that it had even found its way, by 1609, together with the 'City of Nineveh,' into puppet-shows.

With the anonymous *Caesar and Pompey* it is not pretended that Shakspere's has anything in common; and Chapman's differs equally from Shakspere's in subject. Sterline's play more nearly approaches Shakspere's in the latter respect; but it belongs to a different phase of the drama, being pedantically constructed in imitation of the antique. Caesar's death *e.g.* is narrated by a messenger; this therefore was hardly the play alluded to (if any actual play be alluded to) by Polonius in *Hamlet* (iii. 2).

As already noted, references and allusions to Julius Caesar and his fate are scattered broadcast through Shakspere's other plays (1 *Henry VI*, i. 1; 2 *Henry VI*, iv. 1; *ib.*, iv. 7; 3 *Henry VI*, v. 5; *Richard III*, iii. 1; *Henry V*, *Chorus* to v; 2 *Henry IV*, i. 1; *As You Like It*, v. 2; *Hamlet*, i. 1, iii. 2, v. 1; *Cymbeline*, ii. 4, iii. 1; besides of course several passages in *Antony and Cleopatra*; cf. Craik, *u. s.*, p. 49 *seqq.*). Yet there is no proof that he had studied the subject elsewhere than in North's Plutarch, from whose Lives of Caesar, Brutus, and Antonius he has derived his general materials as well as numberless individual touches (cf. Trench, *u. s.*, pp. 52–55). In one passage (the concluding lines of Antony's last speech ending 'This was a man,' v. 5) there is so close a resemblance to a passage (on Mortimer) in Drayton's *Barons' Wars* (1603; a version of the *Mortimerias*, 1596; the passage is elaborated with even greater resemblance to Shakspere's in 1619) that the coincidence can hardly be accidental. According to Henslowe's *Diary*, Munday, Drayton, Webster, Middleton, and others were in 1602 engaged on the joint production of a play called *Caesar's Fall*; and these circumstances, taken together with the publication of Sterline's play in 1604, make it very probable that Shakspere's tragedy (from which Drayton would in this case have copied) was produced about 1603. But this remains conjecture.

What Plutarch failed to furnish, was supplied by genius,—not learning. Herein I do not of course refer to the aberrations from accuracy of historical detail which Shakspere might in any case have permitted himself. That Caesar was killed on the Capitol, and not in the Theatre of Pompeius, seems to have been a popular

tradition, and is glibly assumed as the handle for a bad joke in *Hamlet*. That the Triumvirs meet in Rome (iv. 1), and not at Bononia, was an equally admissible divergence from historical fact. But there are passages which incidentally show that Shakspere's acquaintance with Roman history was slender. The very first speech of the play applies a police-law originating in the mediaeval distinction of guilds to Roman citizens; Cicero's speaking Greek in the popular assembly (i. 2) and Caesar's treatment of a senator (iii. 1) are likewise hardly in keeping with historical colouring. These trifles (for of course they are no more) are more significant than the mis-spellings Decimus for Decius and Calphurnia for Calpurnia, taken over from Sir Thomas North. The Italian names of the old copies (Antonio, Florio, Lucio) need of course not be ascribed to Shakspere.

If the subject of Julius Caesar had been severally attempted by English dramatists before Shakspere made it his own, he has been left in undisputed possession of it by his English successors. The Duke of Buckinghamshire's two plays of *Caesar* and *Brutus* (1772), a feeble execution of a not incorrect idea, have been already mentioned (*ante*, p. 289). Cibber's *Caesar in Egypt* (1724) is only an adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *False One* (of which Cleopatra is the heroine).

Of Voltaire's *Brutus* (begun 1735) mention has also been already made (*ante*, p. 301). Antonio Conti's Italian tragedy *Giulio Cesare* (1726) is described as a drama in the Italian classical style, though not without reminiscences of Shakspere (Conti also translated a part of *Paradise Lost*, and some of Pope's poems. Cf. Klein, vi. 2. 192 *seqq.*). He also wrote a *Marco Bruto*. Lastly, the regretted French historical and linguistic scholar J. J. Ampère's *César, Scènes Historiques* (1859), is rather a 'history' in the old sense, than a tragedy. It begins with '*Sylla dévine César*' and ends with the *prolétaire's* 'Voyons ce qu'Antoine dira.'

Antony and Cleopatra.

(31) ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA. (III) (29) (F 4).

A Book called Antony and Cleopatra was entered in the Stationers' Register in the year 1608 by Edward Blount. As he was afterwards one of the joint publishers of the Folio, the probability is great that this entry refers to Shakspere's play, which in that case was probably acted shortly before. There is however, of course, no certainty on the point. The play appears not to have been printed till the publication of the first Folio.

North's Plutarch (the *Life of Antonius*) is apparently the solitary source of this play. As Archbishop Trench observes (*u. s.*, p. 56), the task was here a different one from that in *Julius Caesar;* 'the Brutus of Plutarch was a character ready made to' the poet's 'hands . . . but . . . the Antony of history, of Plutarch himself, would have been no subject for poetry.' T. Vatke (*Shakespeare's Antonius und Kleopatra und Plutarch's Biographie des Antonius*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii, 1868) has furnished an instructive analysis of the play from this point of view, and has pointed out with much force, how especially in the speeches of Cleopatra, after she has taken refuge in the Monument, the poetic feeling of Shakspere has caused him to diverge from the spirit of her conduct according to Plutarch's narrative. Yet to the very last he uses with marvellous tact the details of Plutarch, which possibly are so striking because derived from the *Memoirs* of Cleopatra's physician, Olympus. (Cf. Trench, *u. s.*, p. 58.)

Jodelle's *Captive Cleopatra* (1551), famed as the first French tragedy, is opened by a soliloquy by the Shade of Antony. (See Ebert, *Entwicklungsgesch. d. franz. Tragödie*, pp. 101–113, for a description of this play.)

To other plays on the subject Shakspere owed nothing. S. Daniel's *Cleopatra* (1594, apparently never acted) is a rhetorical play which only begins from the death of Antony. (It will be described below.) The Countess of Pembroke's *Tragedie of Antonie* (1595) is a translation from the French of Garnier. Beaumont and Fletcher's, or Fletcher and Massinger's, play of *The False One* (*vide infra*) treats of a different period in Cleopatra's history, that of her amour with Julius Caesar; but the Prologue seems to refer to Shakspere's play as one of those in which the names of Antony and Cleopatra had been 'nam'd with glory on the stage.' There may be truth in Mr. Massey's supposition that Cleopatra is modelled on Lady (Penelope) Rich (d. 1606), Sidney's Stella, the lady of the dark eyes, whom Mr. Massey and Mr. Henry Brown have sought to identify with the 'black' lady of the *Sonnets*, and who, it is to be feared, will never receive the rehabilitation which Adolf Stahr (*Cleopatra*, 1864) has sought to bestow upon the Egyptian queen. This ingenious writer regrets that Shakspere, who drew the *woman* Cleopatra in so masterly a way, hardly touched in passing on the historical significance of the *queen* and of her designs!

Dryden's *All for Love* (1678), an adaptation of this play,

has already been noted. Sir Charles Sedley had produced an original play, *Antony and Cleopatra* (a mere dramatised historical anecdote), in the previous year (cf. Geneste, i. 208); Brooke's play of the same name is described as 'one third, or perhaps one half' taken from Shakspere (cf. *ib.* vi. 63).

Troilus and Cressida.

(32) TROILUS AND CRESSIDA. (III) (20) (F 1–2 part; F 2–1 part; F 4–3 part). P. and acted 1609.

The entry in the Stationers' Register of 1603 of *The Booke of Troilus and Cresseda, as yt is acted by my Lo. Chamberlens men*, is thought to refer to an earlier play than Shakspere's. Indeed it is probable that two existed; for a play on the subject was, as we learn from Henslowe's *Diary*, being written by Dekker and Chettle in 1599. It has not come down to us. An entry in 1609, on the other hand, appears to refer to Shakspere's play; in the Epistle prefixed to some of the earlier copies (for the two so-called 'editions' of 1609 exhibit no material variation except in the title-pages) the play is stated to have never been 'staled with the stage' or 'clapperclawed with the palms of the vulgar;' but before the rest of the edition was issued, its representation at the Globe (mentioned in them) must have taken place. It has been pointed out as worthy of notice, that while in the above-mentioned Epistle the play is called a Comedy, it is entered in the Stationers' Register as a History, and designated in the Folio as a Tragedy, being placed in order between the Histories and the Tragedies. In the *Transactions* of the new Shakspere Society (vi) Mr. Fleay seeks to show that the application of his 'rhyme-test' agrees with conclusions from aesthetical and other grounds in pointing to three different periods in Shakspere's career for the composition of the three 'stories' making up the action of this play. The 'Troilus story' he assigns to an earlier date than the 'Hector story;' and this again to a considerably earlier date than the 'Ajax story.' Parts of the 'Troilus story' he however considers to have been 'remodelled in the last revision.'

The sources which Shakspere *might* have used for this play are of course numerous, but, as is well said by Eitner (*Die Troilus-Fabel, &c.* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii, 1868), 'if he needed anything, he looked round for it. Why should Shakespeare have needed to know Old-French or Italian, or Latin, in order to write *Troilus and Cressida*? He found the story in the old, popular books of his



own country; Lydgate stood him in stead for the Latin of Guido della Colonna, Chaucer for the Italian of Boccaccio, and Caxton for the French of Raoul le Fèvre.' It was undoubtedly in the books indicated that Shakspere found the materials which he reproduced in his play; with the possible addition of Chapman's *Homer* (of which the first seven books were published by 1597), where he might have found (though he might also have found them elsewhere) at least the outlines of the character of Thersites. (Cf. Klein, iv. 590, where there are some remarks on Italian romantic tragi-comedy worth notice in connexion with the subject of the species to which *Troilus and Cressida* belongs; and Eitner, *u. s.*, p. 294 *seqq.*) But (the question of Thersites apart) it should be kept in mind, as a cardinal fact in considering the treatment applied by Shakspere to the subject of his play, that in the words of Hertzberg (*Die Quellen der Troilus-Sage in ihrem Verhältniss zu Shakespeare's Troilus und Cressida*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vi, 1871), 'Of the whole action of Shakspere's play not a single feature recurs in Homer; nothing but the greater part of the names, the scene and the supposition,—the war of the Greeks against Troy for the recovery of the ravished Helen,—have remained; but even the motives of this rape itself are un-Homeric.'

The history of the literary treatments of the tale of Troy from Homer to Shakspere has been traced with masterly clearness by H. Düntzer, *Die Sage vom trojanischen Kriege* (1869); Hertzberg, himself a master of Chaucerian literature, has, in the essay referred to above, more especially pursued the relations between the Troilus-myth in particular and Shakspere's play. It must suffice to state here that Greek literature is full of the Trojan war both in its epic and in its dramatic branches, from the Homeric poems down to the *Iliaca* of the Byzantine Tzetzes in the twelfth century of the Christian era. Roman polite literature, so far as we know, began with a translation of the *Odyssey*, and through its classical period and Vergil, down to the days of its decay, when bad novels had superseded sustained versified efforts, occupied itself with a subject irresistible to Roman readers, if for no other reason, on account of its supposed connexion with the ancestry of their race. No other cycle, not even that of Alexander the Great, so largely attracted the favour of writers and readers in the Middle Ages as this. Not only do we meet with treatments of the subject of the Trojan war in the mediaeval literature of almost every European nation from Italy to Iceland, but following the example of the Romans, many

nations, the Franks, the Northmen, the Britons, the very Turks, credited themselves, or were credited by others, with a Trojan ancestry.

The chief source for the history of the Trojan war to the writers of the Middle Ages was a Latin narrative purporting to be translated by Cornelius Nepos from the Greek of the so-called Dares Phrygius, whose existence is more than problematical, and whose name was probably invented to suit *Il.* v. 9. His book, which pretended to have been written by a Trojan eye-witness of the war, was in reality a novel of the days of the decadence of Roman literature, and probably composed somewhere about the sixth century of the Christian era. What is characteristic of Dares is that he places himself steadily on the side of the Trojans, and while representing everything in a light favourable to them and unfavourable to the Greeks, appears to suggest, as Chaucer puts it (*Hous of Fame*, bk. iii), that 'Omere made lyes.' Troilus, who in Homer is only mentioned in passing, here becomes a hero of the first rank.

The emotion which Achilles displays at the sight of the dying Troilus caused this scene to be treated by painters; and a tragedy, *Troilus*, was written by Phrynichus, as well as what was probably a parodistic comedy, *Troilus*, by Strattis.

There was another Latin account of the Trojan war, also professing to be a translation from the Greek—a so-called journal or *Ephemeris* of the Trojan war by the Cretan Dictys, who laid claim to have been a companion of Idomeneus. This book, which in its Latin (and possibly original) form probably dates from the second century of the Christian era, was fuller than Dares,—but as not written from the 'Trojan standpoint' was more sparingly used by mediaeval writers. Similarly, a certain Sisyphus professed to have been a companion of Teucer; and his account was at least quoted in the sixth century. And a certain Corinnus was appealed to even in the fourteenth.

Lastly, the 'Homer' to whom a few of the mediaeval writers appeal is not to be supposed to be the Greek Homer. It is a Latin epitome of the *Iliad* of about 1,100 lines, published under the name of Pindarus Thebanus, and ascribed to the first century of our era.

In addition to these sources, the poems of Vergil, Ovid (*Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*), and Statius (*Achilleis*) were of course open to mediaeval writers.

The most ancient poems on the story of Troy belonging to the Middle Ages are composed in Latin, and were written by French ecclesiastics. An English monk, Josephus Iscanus, produced a poem, *De Bello Trojano*, in the thirteenth century, using the above authorities; and in the same century a German ecclesiastic, Albert of Stade, composed a poem called *Troilus*, but dealing with the general subject of the siege, and not with the particular hero. This, like the Norse *Trojumanna Saga*, which adapts the heroes of antiquity to the nomenclature of Scandinavian mythology, and appeals to the 'Scald Homerus' as an authority, principally follows Dares.

With the second period of mediaeval poetry on this subject begins the tendency to transform the Trojan heroes into mediaeval knights seeking honour in the service of their ladies, and the gods into magicians adored by men for their superhuman powers. In short, everything is transfused by the spirit of the Middle Ages; and where any ancient custom is described abhorrent from the manners of the times in which the poets write, they are careful to assure their hearers that they are telling the truth.

The earliest of these romantic singers of the Trojan war is Benoît de Sainte-More, the author of the *Destruction de Troyes* (commonly called the *Roman de Troyes*), a long poem dating from about the middle of the twelfth century. Where its author thought his authorities (*i. e.* Dictys, and more particularly Dares) dull or insufficient, he supplemented them not only from Ovid and other such sources, but by ornamentation and even invention due to his own knightly and courtly fancy. This was particularly the case with the episode of *Briseïda and Troilus*, of which Benoît is the inventor. Dares had made Calchas a Trojan priest who deserts Troy for the Greek camp, leaving his daughter Briseïda behind him. Quite in the spirit of mediaeval romance, Benoît causes her to engage in an amour with Troilus, one of the sons of Priam. Calchas, during the interval of a truce, demanding the extradition of his daughter, she is obliged, to her deep grief, to quit her lover, both vowing eternal fidelity at parting. But in the Greek camp Briseïda soon forgets her vow, and Diomed succeeds in effacing the image of Troilus from her heart.

Here then we have the origin of the immortal story of Troilus and Cressid, which was to become the poetical type of a lover's perjury; but for which Benoît had no authority beyond his own imagination. His poem became the chief source of the Trojan

romances of German literature,—above all of the *Trojan War* of Conrad of Würzburg, who wrote towards the close of the thirteenth century; Spanish as well as Italian versions direct from Benoît, besides others using later versions of him, have been noted by a recent contributor to the literature of this inexhaustible subject (A. Mustafia; in two pamphlets published at Vienna); and a Middle-Dutch version, identified as by Mærlant, has been quite recently discovered (see *The Academy*, March 1, 1872). But the most noteworthy version of Benoît was a Latin prose novel by Guido de Columna, of Messina, the *Historia Destructionis Trojæ*, completed in 1287; of which, with the occasional use of earlier sources, translations are stated to have been made in Italian, French, Spanish, English, High and Low German, Dutch, Bohemian, and Danish.

From Guido Boccaccio took the subject of his *Filostrato*, 1348; and on the *Filostrato* Chaucer based his poem, though working with much originality of arrangement as well as detail, and also using Benoît directly, as well as other authors for details. The Lollius to whom he appealed as an authority on the Trojan war was doubtless an inexcusable, though ingenious misinterpretation of a well-known Horatian line (*Epist.* i. 2. 1); while the *Trophe* which Lydgate (Prologue to *The Falls of Princes*) states Chaucer to have translated was, as Mr. Rossetti has shown, no other book than the *Filostrato* itself (the two terms both signify the victim of love). Boccaccio created the character (not the name, which is Homeric) of Pandarus.

Lydgate's *Troy-Booke*, on the other hand (before 1460), was a version taken directly from Guido de Columna. Neither Chaucer, nor of course Lydgate, were however the first who attempted to reproduce the story of Troy, or part of it, in English verse. This distinction appears to belong to an anonymous writer of the fourteenth century, whose *Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy* (printed for the *Early English Text Society*, 1869) first introduced the tale of Troilus to English readers. Finally the French *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes* by Raoul le Fèvre (1463 or 1464), which in three books gives an account of the three destructions of Troy, either follows or epitomises Guido; and the *Recuyell of the historyes of Troye, translated and drawen out of frenshe into englishe by W. Caxton* (1471) seems merely a faithful translation of its French original.

It was from Caxton and Lydgate, or both, that Shakspere de-

rived the more general elements of his play, the characters and mutual relations of the several heroes, and the events of the siege. In the main action, however, the love-story of Troilus and Cressida, he has exclusively followed Chaucer. ('The Storry of Troylous and Pandor' was the subject of a 'komedy' presented before Henry VIII among the Christmas entertainments at Eltham in 1515; but though a detailed record exists of some of the costumes worn by the performers, we do not know whether this 'komedy' was more than a pageant.) Whether Shakspere derived Thersites from Chapman's *Homer*, or from other books (the 'Pindarus Thebanus,' Ovid, Juvenal, and Seneca *De Ira*, as Hertzberg thinks), he seems to owe little or nothing else to such knowledge of Homer as he might have acquired, and he certainly was at no pains to modify the ordinary mediaeval view of the merits of the two sides in the war. (As to the play *Thersytes* of 1537, cf. *ante*, p. 139.)

The most recent editors of Bacon (Ellis and Spedding, i. 739; cf. iii. 440) have pointed out that a passage in this play (ii. 2, Hector's quotation, which is a misapplication, from Aristotle) was suggested by Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, where the same misapplication is made. (Aristotle speaks of political, not of moral philosophy. The editors of Bacon show that the Italian Virgilio Malvezzio, in his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*, made the same mistake.)

Dryden's version of this play under the title *Truth found too late* (1678) has been already noticed (*ante*, p. 288, note 1).

Though the story of Troy has continued to furnish poetic literature—and especially that of the drama—with themes, I am not aware that any other hand has followed Shakspere's in reproducing the episode, mediaeval rather than antique in its essence, of *Troilus and Cressida*.

(33) CORIOLANUS. (III) (31) (F 4).

Coriolanus.

It will not be denied by any student of Shakspere that in this and the two other Roman plays remaining on the list of Shaksperean dramas we have works of the poet's maturest period, even if the conclusion of H. Viehoff's plausible argument (*Shakespeare's Coriolan* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iv, 1869) be considered daring, that no other of Shakspere's plays can be ranked above *Coriolanus*, and hardly any beside it, as to perfection in every point

of artistic composition. Nor is it necessary to subscribe to Ulrici's view, as summarised by the same writer, according to which '*Coriolanus* is the first play of a historic tetralogy, presenting the history of the political growth of the Roman people in its most essential phases. *Coriolanus* brings before us the conflict of the Patricians with the Plebeians and the developement of the Republic, *Caesar* the last futile efforts of the dying Republic against the newly-arising monarchical form of polity, *Antony and Cleopatra* the fall of the oligarchy and the character of the imperial government, finally *Titus Andronicus* the irresistible decay of the spirit of antiquity and at the same time the position of the Roman Empire towards the Germanic people rushing in as a new element of life.' (!) This species of combination is best treated apart from questions of date and source.

Malone dates *Coriolanus* 1610, and perhaps this or a rather earlier date is as near the mark as any which could be suggested. In any case the style of the play belongs to Shakspere's latest period; while the source is a work which lay open to him at any time in his career as a dramatist. Sir Thomas North's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes, compared together by that graue learned Philosopher and Historiographer, Plutarke of Chaeronea*, first printed in 1579, was a version of the French translation by James Amyot, Bishop of Auxerre, published in 1559. This work occupies a prominent place in the early history of French prose literature; 'the French,' says Hallam (*Literature of Europe*, Part ii. chap. vii), date from it 'the beginning of an easy and natural style in their own language,'—nor is there any literary growth which has experienced a more successful cultivation than that of French narrative prose. North's translation, though disparaged by Dryden, is now regarded as a work of genuine literary merit; see *e. g.* the tribute to it in the present Archbishop of Dublin's delightful *Plutarch* (*Four Lectures*, 1873), p. 49. Archbishop Trench dwells on the peculiar relations of Shakspere to Plutarch as a source—relations differing widely enough from those in which he stands *e.g.* towards the Italian novelists—'to justify, or almost to justify, the words of Jean Paul, when in his *Titan* he calls Plutarch . . the biographical Shakespeare of universal history.' It is, continues the Archbishop—and this all but exhausts what it is necessary to say of the source of *Coriolanus*—scarcely an exaggeration to say that the whole play is to be found in Plutarch. Some of the expressions in Menenius' apologue (i. 1) appear how-

ever to have been suggested by a version of the same fable in Camden's *Remains*, which were published in 1605. Staunton quotes Douce to the effect that Camden derived his version of the fable from John of Salisbury, who professed to have received it from Pope Hadrian IV. It is of course also to be found in Livy (ii. 32).

The subject of *Coriolanus* was treated by Calderon in a play (which, according to Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, ii. 374, *note*, defies classification as to species) called the *Armas de la Hermosura*.

(34) CYMBELINE. (III) (30) (F 3). Acted 1610 or 1611. Cymbeline.

Dr. Simon Forman, whose *Booke of Plaies and Notes thereof* was discovered by Mr. Collier, saw *Cymbeline* (of which he describes the plot) acted, and as his book belongs to the years 1610 and 1611, the performance, of which he fails to give the date, probably took place about that time. The general style of the play is certainly that of Shakspere's latest period; and the 'rhyme-test' can hardly be accepted as decisive to the contrary. The episode in rhymed verse inserted in v. 4 was doubtless, like the Mask introduced into the *Tempest*, in accordance with the taste of the period; there is no reason, on account of its style, which reminds one of the prefatory lines to the Cantos of the *Faerie Queene*, to impugn Shakspere's authorship of it.

From Holinshed (indirectly from Geoffrey of Monmouth) Shakspere derived the names of Cymbeline and of his two sons, as well as some historical facts concerning the King. But the story of the stealing of the two princes and of their residence in the wilderness appears to be his own invention.

The story of Imogen, which the poet has so skilfully interwoven with that of the sons of Cymbeline, was taken—probably indirectly—from Boccaccio, in whose *Decamerone* the history of Ginevra forms the ninth novel of the Second Day. For the version of the story contained in a tale in a tract called *Westward for Smelts* (stated by Steevens and Malone to have been published as early as 1603; but no edition exists of an earlier date than 1620; the tale is reprinted in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. ii) lacks some most striking details which Shakspere has in common with Boccaccio. An English translation of the Italian novel therefore very probably existed, unless we are to suppose Shakspere to have read the original.

Boccaccio's novel is thought by Simrock to have been derived from a Latin original, which also gave rise to a popular German version of the story. Many points of the story of Imogen are reproduced in various legends; the best-known instance of a wager such as that upon which Posthumus ventures is of course Livy's narrative of Lucretia. The Spanish dramatist Rueda in his *Eufemia* is thought by Klein (ix. 153) to have derived the wager-plot, which resembles part of that of *Cymbeline*, from a popular ballad. The device of the chest too is known to Western as well as Eastern story. It is more curious that the later adventures of Imogen—her seeking refuge in the wilderness and her deathlike sleep—which Shakspere found in none of his known sources occur in the lovely fairy-tale of *Schneewittchen*. (Pointed out by K. Schenkl; cf. Simrock, i. 274.)

The name of Imogen—sweetest of all Shaksperean names—occurs in Holinshed and Geoffrey of Monmouth, not however in the account of Cymbeline, but in that of Brutus and Locrine. (It occurs in the play of *Locrine*, i. 1.)

Delius has pointed out the coincidence, which as he says may be fortuitous, between one or two touches in act i. and the French *Un Miracle de Nostre Dame*.

With the song 'Hark! hark! the lark,' &c. (ii. 3) compare Sonnet xxix.

The Winter's Tale.

(35) THE WINTER'S TALE. (III) (33) (F 4). Acted 1611.

Dr. Simon Forman saw this play acted at the Globe on May 15, 1611. It was performed in the same year, on November 5, at Whitehall. There is every reason to suppose it to have been written not long before. The 'rhyme-test' places it last in the list of Shakspere's plays; for it contains no rhymed 5-measure lines.

The source of the play is Greene's novel of *Pandosto, the Triumph of Time*, published in 1588, and republished under a title which in the first edition only holds a secondary place, *The Historie of Dorastus and Fawnia*, in several subsequent editions. (Printed in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, vol. i.) From the narrative of this novel, which is in the euphuistic style, Shakspere, while changing all the names of the characters, only diverges in one point of importance, *viz.* that Hermione is preserved alive,



while in the novel Bellaria has really died. Simrock compares the rediscovery of Lucina in *Pericles*, and the return into the light of day of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Some of the characters, especially Paulina and Autolycus, were Shakspere's own invention. The name of Autolycus is from Greek mythology, in which Autolycus is a son of Hermes; but Warburton's discovery that the whole of the first speech of Autolycus (iv. 2) is taken from Lucian's (?) book on *Astrology*, seems to be a hallucination. Shakspere probably took the name from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (xi. 311 *seqq.*), as known to him through Golding's *Translation* (1575). There seems to be a reference to Ovid in the passage about Proserpina (iv. 2).

It is possible that the pretty title was suggested to Shakspere by that of *A Winter Night's Vision*, an addition to the *Mirror for Magistrates* published by Niccols in 1610, the year when the *Winter's Tale* was perhaps written. But the term 'a winter's tale' was familiarly used to express a wonderful story suitable to be told over the fire on winter nights ('So I am content to drive away the time with an old wives' winter's tale;' Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*).

The similarity between Autolycus' song (iv. 3) and that of Friar Tuck and Jenny in the *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* (iii. 1) by Anthony Munday (1598) has been already pointed out (*ante*, p. 236, *note* 2). The lines sung by Autolycus (iv. 2), 'Jog on, jog on,' form part of a song reprinted in a collection called *An Antidote against Melancholy* (1661); the refrain had been set to music by John Hilton, and thus published in *The Dancing Master*, 1650.

Klein (x. 494) compares in plot Lope's comedy, *El marmol de Felisardo*. Coleridge's *Zapolya* (1817), which he wished his readers to receive 'as a Christmas tale,' is confessedly an imitation of *The Winter's Tale*, with the plot of which elements of that of *Cymbeline* are interwoven.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the absurd pedantry of Hanmer's emendation of 'Bithynia' for 'Bohemia' as the scene of part of this play. The conjecture is wholly unjustifiable; for Ben Jonson (see *Conversations with Drummond*) twitted Shakspere with the 'shipwrack in Bohemia.' And it would probably have been forgotten, as it deserved, had it not caused the late Mr. Charles Kean, when producing *The Winter's Tale*, to plunge into a variety of antiquarian details derived from monuments in Asia Minor.

The Tempest.

(36) THE TEMPEST. (III) (34) (F 4). Acted 1611.

The authenticity of the source which states *The Tempest* (without naming the author) to have been acted at Whitehall before James I by the King's Players (Shakspere's company) has been impugned. The notices having reference to Shakspere in the Accounts of the Revels at Court under Elisabeth and James I (published in *Extracts* for the *Shakespeare Society* by P. Cunningham, 1842) have been rejected as spurious by both English and German critics. (See Ingleby, *Shakspere-Controversy*, and cf. K. Elze, *Die Abfassungszeit des Sturms*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. vii, 1872, p. 35, who refers to Ulrici; and Meissner, pp. 25, 26.)

The question of this evidence apart, the date of *The Tempest* is to be determined by internal proofs only, as we know of no impression of the play till the Folio of 1623, where, as is well known, it occupies the first place. These internal proofs are partly those of style, which have inclined most writers of eminence to accept 1611 or thereabouts as a most likely period for the composition of the play. Hertzburg has dwelt especially on the versification, which exhibits a very considerable number of feminine endings. Partly the internal proofs consist of supposed historical references; but Carriere's supposition that the Mask (iv. 1) was introduced in 1613 into the play as originally produced in 1611, in honour of the marriage of the Princess Elisabeth, is mere conjecture; while it is to be feared that the pleasing interpretation of Prospero's words in the last scene of the play—

> 'And thence retire me to my Milan, where
> Every third thought shall be my grave'—

as alluding to Shakspere's own retirement to Stratford, must be regarded in the same light. There remains, as affecting the question of the date of the play, that of its sources; for Hunter's supposition that *The Tempest* is the play mentioned by Meres in 1598 as *Love's Labour's Won* has found no support; although favoured by the marvellous conjecture of Klements that a portrait of Queen Elisabeth is intended in the Witch Sycorax.

Much learning has been expended in endeavours to identify the sources of *The Tempest*. The most recent contribution of importance to the question is Johannes Meissner's *Untersuchungen über*

Shakespeare's Sturm (1872; a well-written popular summary of this book appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, October, 1872).

In the first instance, already Tieck adverted to the resemblance between *The Tempest* and the German play, the *Comedia von der schönen Sidea*, by Jacob Ayrer (reprinted in Cohn, *u. s.*, pp. 4 *seqq.*; cf. p. lxviii). Ayrer's play, though its human characters are Lithuanian and Polish princes and princesses, is purely legendary; but there is evidence that he had either a legend or play before him, as he makes casual reference to 'the quarrelsome Duke Leopold,' who does not appear in the play itself. The resemblance between *The Tempest* and *The Fair Sidea* is by no means confined to the general course of the action; the parallel passages are far too striking to admit of any other conclusion than that of the derivation of one of the two plays from the other, or of both from some common original. But the latter supposition it is difficult to accept, inasmuch as this common source must have furnished not only the main action, but even several of the comic incidents which have no integral connexion with it. Now, Jacob Ayrer died on March 26, 1605, so that, unless Shakspere is to be supposed to have written *The Tempest* before that date, Ayrer was certainly not the borrower. On the other hand, a special connexion between him and English comedians seems indicated as possible by the circumstance, noted by Cohn, that the album of Johannes Cellarius of Nürnberg, Ayrer's town, contains the autographs of two English actors under the respective dates of 1606 and 1604. English actors performed a *Sedea* 'in good German' in 1613. The conclusion seems inevitable that the outline of *The Tempest*, and some passages, were suggested to Shakspere by a knowledge, probably gained through English actors who had returned from Germany, of Ayrer's play.

A ballad called *The Enchanted Island*, discovered by Collier in a MS. apparently dating from the period of the Commonwealth, was probably written after *The Tempest;* its very title suggests a knowledge of Dryden's adaptation; its geography is more intelligible than Shakspere's; and it seems to contain reminiscences of Greene's *Alphonsus* in its names, which are not the same as Shakspere's, though he must of course have been acquainted with Greene's play. Indeed, the ballad is signed 'R. G.,' as if to claim Greene's authorship.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on the points of contact between *The Tempest* and *Pericles of Tyre* (striking as they are, especially if

the theory (*ante*, p. 422) be accepted that in the latter Shakspere was merely an adapter, in which case he might have resumed ideas which in *Pericles* he had been unable to carry out), or on the resemblance of passages in *The Tempest* to passages of the *Orlando Furioso* (translated by Harington, 1591; they are those referring to the shipwreck of Rogero, to the desert island inhabited by a hermit, and to the final reconciliation there between Rogero and Orlando. cantos xli and xliii). Of far more signal importance are the several narratives of voyages and discoveries, belonging to this period of English history, which might have been used by Shakspere in the composition of his play.

In 1577 Magellan's voyage to the South-Pole was described in Eden's *Historye of Travaile in the West and East Indies*. Here occurs the description of an extraordinary and solitary giant, clad in skins and strangely painted, who approached the travellers dancing and singing, and pointed to the heavens to indicate the region whence the travellers had come. Others like him were afterwards discovered, who, when put in chains, called for aid on their great devil *Setebos*. The name of *Setebos* to whom Caliban appeals (v. 1) occurs in no other known authority.

Of more importance is the account to which Malone first directed attention of a voyage made in 1609, with the object of making discoveries on the coast of Virginia. Already in 1605 the Earl of Southampton helped to equip a vessel for this purpose; and in the expedition fitted out in 1608 by 'the Adventurers and Company of Virginia' the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke were interested together with other noblemen. It sailed in 1609; and an account of its *Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Divels*, was published in 1610 by Silvester Jourdan. (The expedition was at a later date chronicled, with a mention of 'the dreadful coast of the Bermudas,' in Howe's supplement to Stowe's *Annals*.) The reference to 'the still-vex'd Bermoothes' in *The Tempest* (i. 2), as well as resemblances between the play and the narrative in the description of the storm, and in the circumstance of three sailors being left on the island, as well as details (such as Prospero's calling Caliban a tortoise, and tortoises being specially mentioned in all descriptions of the Bermudas), certainly make it probable that Shakspere was acquainted with the narrative of this expedition, in which from Southampton's connexion with it, if for no other reason, he could not fail to take a special interest. He appears to have made use of the *True Declaration of the Estate of*

the Colonie in Virginia, published in 1610 'by the Councell;' but more especially to have taken many points and details of expression from *'A True Repertory of the wracke and redemption of Sir Th. Gates, Knight; upon, and from the Islands of the Bermudas, &c.*, which is reprinted in Purchas' *Pilgrimes* (1625). This (and perhaps the former) was written by William Strachey, the 'secretary and recorder' of the 'Councell of Virginia,' which held its sittings in the colony itself, who in 1612 lived in London as an author in *Blackfriars*. This happy discovery, which Meissner was able to print as an appendix to his treatise, seems to me finally to set at rest the question as to the approximate date of the composition of *The Tempest*. ('A most dreadfull *Tempest*' is by the bye the commencement of the heading of Strachey's chapter on the shipwreck and the Bermudas; which according to Meissner was used not by Shakspere only, but by Fletcher in his *Sea Voyage*). Hunter, who thought the play written in 1596, attempted to fix the island of Lampedusa (S.W. of Malta) as the scene of the play.

Many other sources (Ralegh and Hakluyt among them) have been suggested for the details of our play; but I must pass over these, in order to add a word with reference to the general superhuman machinery of the play, and the character of Caliban in particular. With regard to the former, it is well known how the belief in magic largely prevailed, even among educated men, in the early part of the sixteenth century; King James I's work on Daemonology (1603) may be mentioned as a familiar instance. Many figures dimly resembling, or it may be of a nature to have suggested, that of Prospero might accordingly be found in our own literature before *The Tempest; e.g.* that of Marlowe's *Faustus* and Greene's *Friar Bacon* (cf. Meissner, p. 48). To the conception of Ariel a striking parallel has been found in the Satyr's description of his powers of service in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* (v. 5; the priority of date is of course a matter of question; but the *Faithful Shepherdess* was written in or before 1611). The *actual* machinery necessary for the performance of Ariel's feat (iii. 3) and perhaps for the appearance of the goddesses (iv. 1) might well have been invented by Inigo Jones (cf. Meissner, p. 53), of whose labours I shall have more to say in connexion with Ben Jonson.

Lastly, what was the origin of the conception of Caliban? It undoubtedly connects itself with the general idea of the desert island, to which it forms an all but inevitable supplement. But to

the influence of such accounts of desert places and their savage inhabitants as that cited above was added that of a literary tendency of this very age. I refer of course to the descriptions of Utopias, inhabited by beings free from the debasing influences of a false civilisation, of which the best-known example is Sir Thomas More's *De Optimo reipublicae statu deque nova* INSULA *Utopia* (published abroad in Latin in 1516, and in its first English translation in 1551). An Italian *Civitas solis*, written by Campanella in 1600, is likewise noted; and the production of this class of works, as is well known, continued to be a favourite exercise of genius and of ingenuity in many later periods of our own literature; indeed, our own generation has had to submit to a revival of this at times rather fatiguing kind of invention. But a more special literary panegyric of the blessings of an uncivilised state of society was in existence in one of the Essays of Montaigne, published in 1588, and translated into English by Florio in 1603. The 30th chapter of Book I of this translation prefixes the title *Of the Caniballes* to an encomium on the blessings enjoyed by nations 'neere their originall naturalitie.' It is indisputable that Caliban is a metathesis of Canibal (*i. e.* Caribee); and it seems difficult to escape from the conclusion, that Shakspere intended his monster as a satire incarnate on Montaigne's 'noble savage.' In any case, Gonzalo's speeches (ii. 1) descriptive of the Utopia he would found on the island are in part taken *verbatim* from this very chapter of Florio's translation. (As to Shakspere's supposed autograph in the copy of Florio's *Montaigne* in the British Museum, cf. *ante*, p. 332, *note* 3.) Elze has sought a reference to this in a passage in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (iii. 2):

'Here's Pastor Fido—
* * * * * *
* * All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly:
Almost as much as from Montagnié.'

If this be in allusion to Shakspere, it would, as Elze shows, fix the date of *The Tempest* as early as 1607, when *Volpone* was produced. But it cannot be regarded as certain that the passage refers to Shakspere (whether to *The Tempest* or to *Hamlet*, see *ante*, p. 413, or to both).

There is another well-known passage in Ben Jonson (Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*), the reference in which to 'those that beget

tales, *tempests*, and such like drolleries' can hardly be dissociated from Shakspere. *Bartholomew Fair* was produced in 1614.

The character of Caliban has been analysed with great acuteness, as I judge from an article in *The Saturday Review* (April 12, 1873), by Dr. Daniel Wilson (of Toronto), who recognises in him the 'Missing Link' which the world of reality has as yet failed to furnish to the adherents of the theory of evolution.

The famous passage in act iv. sc. 1 cannot have been written without a reminiscence of one in Lord Sterline's tragedy of *Darius* (1603), quoted by Staunton and Delius. The same editors note the use of a passage in the *Metamorphoses*, bk. vii (translated by Golding, 1567), for Prospero's speech in v. 1 ('Ye elves of hills,' &c.).

The Tempest suggested *The Sea Voyage* of Fletcher (*vide infra*) and *The Goblins* of Suckling (1641); it was, as has been already noted, subjected to a treatment unsurpassed in the whole history of dramatic 'reproductions' by Dryden, working on a suggestion of D'Avenant's (1669); and D'Urfey sought to improve Fletcher as Dryden improved Shakspere in his *Commonwealth of Women*. Waldron (who continued Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*) is stated to have produced in 1796 a Second Part to *The Tempest*, called *The Virgin Queen*, which I have not seen.

On the other hand, *The Tempest* fed the imagination of Milton, who derived from it more than one of the beauties of his *Comus* (cf. lines 205 *seqq.*; 265 *seqq.*); and in our own day a poet of eminence has characteristically been attracted by the metaphysical problem of the character of Caliban to attempt its solution in an original poem of his own (R. Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos, or Natural Theology in the Island*, in *Dramatis Personae*, 1864).

(37) HENRY VIII. (III) (22). Acted as a new play 1613. † Henry VIII.

The question of the date of this play turns on internal evidence, and has accordingly not yet been brought to any definite solution.

Two pieces of contemporary evidence seem to prove this play to have been acted, and acted as a new play, on June 29, 1613. The one is in a letter from Thomas Lorkin to Sir Thomas Puckering bearing date June 30, 1613, in which it is related that 'no longer since than yesterday, while Burbage his companie were acting at the Globe the play of Henry VIII, and there shooting

of certeyne chambers in way of triumph, the fire catch'd.' The other is in a letter from Sir Henry Wotton to his nephew, dated July 6 of the same year, in which a more circumstantial account is given (not without a certain afterglow of Puritan approval of the fate which befell 'that virtuous fabric') of the same occurrence, said to have taken place on the acting of 'a *new* play, called *All is True*, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry VIII, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage; the Knights of the Order, with their Georges and Garter, the guards with their embroidered coats and the like; sufficient, in truth, within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous.' (It may be worth noting that if this was Shakspere's play, the description of it in July as *new* hardly agrees with the supposition in a paper in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, referred to below, that *Henry VIII* was produced in honour of the marriage of the Princess Elisabeth, which was celebrated on St. Valentine's Day, 1613.) The accident is here also said to have occurred on the shooting off of certain cannons on the entry of the King at York-Place; and the stage-direction (i. 4) is actually 'chambers discharged.' The unfortunate accident in question is also commemorated in a contemporary ballad or 'sonnett upon the pittifull burneing of the Globe Play-House in London,' the burden of which, as Collier (*Annals of the Stage*, i. 387) points out, seems to have reference to the title of the play mentioned by Wotton:—

'Oh sorrow, pittifull sorrow, and *yet all this is true.*'

The only other known play which might possibly be referred to is Rowley's *When you see me you know me*, which treats of events of Henry VIII's reign from the death of Queen Jane (Seymour), and had the second title of *The Famous Chronicle Historie of King Henry VIII.* It had been printed in 1605, and was reprinted in 1613, doubtless on account of the popularity of Shakspere's play; but it could hardly have had a treble title[1]. Unless therefore a third play of which we know nothing was acted on this occasion, *All is True* must be identified with Shakspere's *Henry VIII.* Whether *The Enterlude of King Henry VIII*, referred to in a memorandum in the Stationers' Register, 1605, be Shakspere's play, or Rowley's, or yet another, there seems no evidence to show; but the second supposition seems the most probable. (From

[1] It will be briefly described below.



Henslowe's *Diary* it appears that *The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey* by Munday, Drayton, and Chettle, and *Cardinal Wolsey* by Wentworth Smith and Chettle, were on the stage in 1601 and 1602.)

The question however remains, whether this play as acted on the fatal 29th of June was actually a new play, or only one written (and perhaps produced) at an earlier date and now reproduced with alterations. The internal evidence on this point is of two kinds.

The play as we have it contains references to Queen Elisabeth, *viz.* the passage in iii. 2 ('I persuade me,' &c.), and the famous lines, also *ex post facto* prophetic, spoken by Cranmer at the end of the last act. On the other hand it also contains, following the second of these passages, an equally complimentary passage in reference to King James. The question is whether the two former passages were written in Elisabeth's lifetime and the last was only added on the reproduction of the piece in the new reign.

For my part, I confess to grave doubts whether Queen Elisabeth would have relished—I will not say the epithet '*aged* princess' applied to her by Cranmer (v. 4), for that might have been a later alteration, but—the entire treatment of her father's and mother's wooing, and the contrast in which it stands to the treatment of the character of Catharine, who is in truth the heroine of the play. Nor can I believe that she would have permitted herself to be introduced on the stage as an infant in swaddling-clothes. I subscribe to the opinion of Delius, that the relation of Shakspere to the Queen is not known to have been such, and his boldness as a dramatist is not known to have been such, as to allow us to suppose that he would have ventured upon splendid homage and a lofty freedom of historical criticism. In opposition to the opinion of most English critics (beginning with Malone, who says '*Henry VIII* was written, I believe, in 1601'), I strongly incline to the conclusion that *Henry VIII* or *All is True* was written *after* and not *before* the death of the Queen, *i.e.* between 1603 and 1613, in which case there is no reason against assuming that the play when produced in the latter year was actually a *new play*.

This supposition is corroborated by the general character of the diction and versification of *Henry VIII* (its elliptical sentences, its condensed phraseology, its broken metre, its remarkably numerous feminine endings of lines), though some points in these might be accounted for by a theory to be adverted to immediately. It is further supported by the fact (proved by a juxtaposition of

passages by Mr. Gerald Massey in his work on *The Sonnets of Shakspere*) that the last words of Essex on the scaffold are worked up with great fulness of detail in Buckingham's speech on his way to execution (ii. 1). The execution of Essex took place in 1601; and it is hardly conceivable that Shakspere should have permitted himself, or been permitted, to challenge sympathy for Elisabeth's unhappy favourite during the two years which remained of her life. There is also I think some force in Gifford's remark, that the Prologue evidently treats the play as a novelty with which the public was wholly unacquainted.

The coincidences between Shakspere's and Rowley's plays, noted by Elze in his Introduction to the latter, are of course equally explicable on the supposition that Rowley's drama was written before an early Shaksperean *Henry VIII*, or on the other that Rowley's was brought out in opposition to this, or on the third that Shakspere's was written at a much later date. Elze wavers between the former two hypotheses, inclining to the second (p. 109). To the third he too seems opposed.

The resemblance in style of portions of this play—notably of the Prologue and the Epilogue—to Ben Jonson, coupled with the (unproved) assumption that Shakspere had by 1613 left off writing for the stage, led to the belief that the passages in question are by Ben Jonson. Schlegel, who is extremely positive (according to his wont) as to the play having been originally written under Elisabeth, mentions 'Ben Jonson's production of the piece' as a well-known fact, and has no doubt as to his having been the author of the Prologue. But then he likewise maintains that Shakspere has succeeded in adhering to historical truth in unmasking Henry VIII as he really was, while yet representing him in a light which to Queen Elisabeth might appear favourable. I see no warrant for assenting to either part of the theory. The attention to pageantry which this piece displays is characteristic of the age rather than of the individual poet.

On the other hand, it has been recently asserted (and the authority of Mr. Tennyson has been appealed to in support of this view) that parts of *Henry VIII* are to be recognised as contributions by Fletcher. This view was elaborated in a paper in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1850 (which has since been reprinted with the name of the author, Mr. Spedding, for the *Transactions* of the new Shakspere Society). Mr. Spedding examined the play from two points of view,—first that of dramatic



treatment and style, then from that of versification; and came to the conclusion that only portions of it are by Shakspere. His arguments from versification are more striking than his other arguments. Undoubtedly lines with the redundant syllable are far more numerous here than in any other Shaksperean play (see Mr. Fleay's table, *ante*, p. 362), undoubtedly also the number of 'unstopped' lines is remarkably great. These however are after all only extreme developements of tendencies which indisputably become stronger in Shakspere's versification with the progress of time; and as the play (according to the view urged above) was one of the latest, if not the very latest, of Shakspere's dramatic works, they would here reach their highest point. Still, it is certainly remarkable that the proportion of lines with feminine endings should vary so much in the several scenes, and that those in which it is largest should be by a colourable theory traceable to a different hand than Shakspere's. (See also Mr. Fleay's confirmatory note in the *Transactions*.) But I must demur altogether to the audacity of a criticism which regards it as impossible that Shakspere should have treated the whole subject with the want of historical breadth and completeness which the play undoubtedly exhibits, and which makes Fletcher the scapegoat, 'who, finding the original design' (*i.e.* Mr. Spedding's original design) 'not very suitable to the occasion and utterly beyond his capacity, expanded the three acts into five, by interspersing scenes of show and magnificence, and passages of description, and long poetical conversations, in which his strength lay; dropped all allusion to the great ecclesiastical revolution which he could not manage and for which he had no materials supplied him; converted what should have been the middle into the end; and so turned out a splendid "historical masque or show-play," which was no doubt very popular then, as it has been ever since.' If this kind of criticism be legitimate, the operations of its 'desperate hook' will call for the very closest vigilance; and it will be more particularly suspected in the case of critics who like Mr. Spedding are never at a loss. For when in act iv he does 'not so well know what to think,' and regards this part of the play as bearing 'evidence of a more vigorous hand than Fletcher's, with less mannerism,' while yet lacking 'the freshness and originality of Shakspere,' he at once hints a way of escaping from the difficulty, *viz.* that possibly *Beaumont's* hand is to be here suspected. It may, by the bye, be noticed that in *Philaster* there is a passage ('all your better

deeds shall be in water writ, but this in marble') closely parallel to one in *Henry VIII*, and—which seems to me hardly to favour the hypothesis of Fletcher's co-operation with Shakspere in this play—that a striking passage in Cranmer's speech is very ludicrously parodied in Fletcher's *The Beggars' Bush* (in Higgen's mock address, ii. 1).

Henry VIII is based upon the Chronicle of Holinshed, with occasional use perhaps of that of Halle continued by Grafton. Holinshed had derived much of his account of Wolsey from Cavendish's *Life*, to which probably Shakspere himself had access, though it was not printed till 1641, and then in a garbled form. (See an account of this book in the Preface to Singer's edition, 1827.) The tradition of Wolsey having been the son of a butcher is not in Cavendish. The episode of the accusation and acquittal of Cranmer seem to have been taken by Shakspere from Fox's *Christian Martyrs*, published in 1563. The transaction is related at length in Strype's *Memorials* of the Archbishop; but Mr. Froude (iv. 5) was unable to discover any contemporary authority which would allow him to place confidence in the details. The order of the events in the play is not in strict accordance with historical accuracy, and as a matter of course the poet has dealt very freely with distances of time. Thus, the play begins with a reference, as to an event not long past, to the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520), which agrees with the main action of the beginning of the play, the fall of Buckingham (1521). But contemporaneously with this is made to take place the reversal of the decree for taxing the people (1526); and Campeggio is made to arrive at the time of Buckingham's fall, whereas he actually arrived eight years afterwards (1529). There seem similar inaccuracies, not perhaps unintentional (for much depends on dates in this unpleasant question), in the chronology of the beginning and course of Henry's attachment to Anne Bullen. Lastly, the acquittal of Cranmer happened ten years later (1543) than the birth of Elisabeth (1533) with which it is in the play made to coincide. (Most of these licences are pointed out by Hunter.) There is also a personal confusion between the Duke of Norfolk (i. 1) who was present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold and who died in 1524 and was therefore not living at the time of Wolsey's overthrow in 1529, and the Duke of Norfolk who became so in 1524 and was in 1520 deputy in Ireland (iii. 2). The Surrey in 1529 was

the poet; and Shakspere has rolled two Norfolks, and again two Surreys, into one.

The allusion about the 'fellow in a long motley coat' (Prologue) is thought to be to Will Summers the jester, as playing an important part in Rowley's play. The passage immediately preceding is thought likewise to have a satirical reference to Rowley's introduction of a fight between the king (in disguise) and a highwayman. Elze (Introduction to Rowley's *When You See Me, You Know Me*, p. xiii) thinks that 'even the repeated assertion that in Shakespeare's play "all is true" sounds like an indirect reproof' of the comic scenes invented by Rowley; and that the reference in the Epilogue to the abuse of the city was intended to recall the satirical representation of the City-guard and the Counter in Rowley's drama.

'Doubtful' plays in the Third and Fourth Folios.

All the plays the dates and sources of which have been briefly discussed in the preceding pages were printed in the First Folio edition of 1623. Of this the Second was merely a reprint; but the Third, of 1663, and its reprint the Fourth, contained in addition *Pericles*, which has since maintained a place in all editions of Shakspere, and six other plays. These six afterwards fell into oblivion, and their claim to be Shaksperean was disregarded, till their republication by Malone in his *Supplements* (1778) again directed attention to them. They were subsequently incorporated into Hazlitt's edition, and translated by Tieck, as well as by other German writers. A. W. Schlegel entertained no doubt as to the Shaksperean authorship of at least three among them, *viz. Cromwell*, *Oldcastle*, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy;* as to the remaining three, *viz. Locrine*, *The London Prodigal*, and *The Puritan*, he left the question more or less open. Three of these plays (*Sir John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*) were separately published during Shakspere's lifetime with his name, and three (*Locrine*, *The Puritan*, and *Cromwell*) with his initials attached to them; but it may be at once stated that even the former circumstance has little or no weight in determining the question of his authorship; such publications were either booksellers' frauds or acts of

piracy, and the former alternative is at least as probable as the latter. Among these plays one has been brought home to its real authors; the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle* has accordingly been already noticed as a work by Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathwaye (*vide ante*, p. 237).

Other plays wholly or partially ascribed to Shakspere.

In addition to these plays several others have been in whole or in part at various times ascribed to Shakspere. Only two of these were ever published with his name (as joint author), *viz. The Two Noble Kinsmen* ('by Fletcher and W. Shakspeare' in 1634) and *The Birth of Merlin* ('by William Shakspeare and William Rowley' in 1662). Of the rest, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (1608), *Edward III* (1596), *Mucedorus* (1598), *Arden of Feversham* (1592), and *A Larum for London* (*or the Siege of Antwerp*) (1602), were published anonymously during Shakspere's lifetime; *Fair Em* probably not till after his death (before 1619). *The Arraignment of Paris* was published anonymously in 1584, but was certainly written by Peele (*vide ante*, p. 205). *George-a-Green, the Pinner of Wakefield*, is now universally acknowledged as Greene's (*vide ante*, p. 222). *The Lover's Melancholy*, by Ford, was acted in 1628, and printed in the following year; it was a mere idle rumour that attributed it to Shakspere's hand. *The Double Falsehood*, Dekker's *Satiro-Mastix*, *Wily Beguiled*, and *The Tragical and Lamentable Murder of Master G. Sanders*, have been arbitrarily attributed to Shakspere, the first by Theobald. Lastly, there are the names of six plays entered as Shakspere's in the Stationers' Register, *viz. The History of King Stephen; Duke Humphrey, a Tragedy; Henry I* and *Henry II* ('by Wm. Shakespeare and Robert Davenport'), *Iphis and Ianthe, or a Marriage without a Man* (comedy), and *The History of Cardenio* ('by Mr. Fletcher and Shakespeare'). None of these six is extant; the last-named has been thought to be identical with *The Double Falsehood* mentioned above[1].

From the above it will be seen at once how, in the case

[1] See a brief digest of the 'doubtful plays' by Baron G. Vincke in *Jahrbuch*, vol. viii (1873); and cf. *infra*, under Beaumont and Fletcher.

of the whole of the extant plays attributed to Shakspere which it is possible to take into consideration at all, a remark applies made by Capell with reference to one of them, *i.e.* that the answer to the question as to any one of them being the work of Shakspere 'must be conjecture only, and matter of opinion.' Perhaps too it may be added that the attempt to find traces of Shakspere's activity as an adapter of other men's work, or as a superintendent of the labours of another playwright to which he merely added more or less important touches of his own, might be made in the case of any play which may fairly be supposed to have been produced at any of the theatres with which he was connected. And as before 1594 there is every reason to believe that he worked wherever work as a dramatist was required of him, the plays in which a share may be attributable to him cannot even be limited to those produced at the Globe and the Blackfriars. Much therefore as I sympathise with the endeavours of Mr. R. Simpson, who suspects Shakspere's hand in *The Siege of Antwerp*, I shall not follow him in the enquiry as to Shakspere's share in the authorship of this or any other play with which tradition or earlier conjecture has not specially associated his name.

Thus reduced in number, the 'doubtful' plays in question may be briefly enumerated as follows, according to the order of their first known editions.

Arden of Feversham (pr. 1592).

Arden of Feversham[1] was first printed (anonymously) in 1592; other editions followed in 1599 and 1633; and an adaptation of the play was begun by Lillo, and finished by Dr. John Hoadly after Lillo's death in 1739. In 1770 an inhabitant of Faversham, Edward Jacob, reprinted the old play, with a preface in which he attributed it to Shakspere. A play called *Murderous Michael*, acted in 1578, was perhaps an early work on the same subject, if not an early version of the same play. Among the critics who have regarded Shakspere's authorship of *Arden of*

[1] Printed in Delius' *Pseudo-Shakspere'sche Dramen* (vol. i, 1855). Cf. *An Essay on the Tragedy of Arden of Feversham*, by C. E. Donne (Vicar of Faversham), 1873.

Feversham as at least possible, are Tieck, Ulrici, and Charles Knight.

This play is the dramatic version of a horrible story narrated by Holinshed, concerning the murder of a Kentish gentleman of the name of Arden (there seems no connexion whatever between his and the Warwickshire family) by his wife, her paramour, and some ruffians hired by them. The time at which this event happened was the reign of Edward VI. There is accordingly a certain resemblance between this Kentish and *The Yorkshire Tragedy;* but whereas the latter, as will be seen, is little more than a dramatised anecdote, the former is a regular drama in five acts. Holinshed's narrative (the facts of which appear to be partially borne out by official records) is followed with tolerable closeness in the drama,—which has many local allusions (elucidated by Mr. C. E. Donne),—even to the reproduction of the delays in the execution of the crime, for which hardly any dramatical motives are supplied. The play is in short a slovenly performance, and the characters are throughout either repulsive or uninteresting. There seems an attempt to suggest in Arden's avarice a poetic justification of his doom; but this is too slightly hinted at to be of much effect. The character of the wife, hateful in itself, is invested with no charm or allurement whatever; vice is painted by the dramatist as nakedly and blackly as by the chronicler himself. The characters of the ruffians are rather in Ben Jonson's manner; but there is little humour to relieve the loathsomeness of the figures.

On the other hand, the play contains one or two passages which are very like Shakspere in manner, particularly as it seems to me Shakebag's speech while he is waiting to perpetrate the murder, and Arden's foretelling as it were his own doom by a narrative of a warning dream (iii. 2 and 3). The versification has been remarked upon by Knight as exhibiting a freedom of movement possessed by no other dramatist of the time but Shakspere. Mr. Donne thinks there is 'a sort of dawn of Shakspere' in Mosbie's speech (iii. 5), the blank-verse of which passage he considers to resemble that of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (*vide*



infra). For the thought of the passage he compares *Macbeth*, iii. 4.

But these are only incidental resemblances; while, as Mr. Donne points out, other plays written between 1592 and 1600 might as, or more, easily stand the test of parallel passages of mere conventional phrases, applied by Jacob. Among such plays he instances *A Warning for Fair Women*, which treats of a similar domestic crime[1]. (The external circumstance that the Earl of Leicester's players were in Faversham in 1590 cannot be allowed any weight.) In general, it must be asserted, with a critic in *The Edinburgh Review* (vol. lxxi), that *Arden of Feversham* has little resemblance even to Shakspere's earliest manner, while there is no evidence of its having been composed before his first acknowledged dramas. I am inclined to think it possible that Shakspere's hand added a few touches here and there, but to reject Jacob's theory of his authorship of the play as a whole.

Locrine (pr. 1595).

Locrine[2] was published anonymously in 1595. It may however have been written at a much earlier date, and the compliment to Queen Elisabeth at the close (where she is spoken of as having reigned for 'eight and thirty years') may have been adapted. Bernhardi (*Greene's Leben*, p. 33) considers that allusions in *Locrine* fix its date at some time before the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, if not of Babington. (These allusions, chiefly I presume contained in the passages concerned with Estrild, might however have been made after Mary's death.) Schlegel considered 'the proofs for the genuineness of this piece not wholly unambiguous, the doubts against it on the other hand important.' He thought it must stand or fall with *Titus Andronicus*,—an assertion of which I am not aware that he deigned any proofs; it would have been strange that Meres should have mentioned the one and not the other, if they were

[1] Another play on a similar subject must have been *The tragical and lamentable murder of Master G. Sanders of London, Merchant, near Shooters-Hill, consented to by his own wife*, which appears to have been attributed to Shakspere, but which I have never seen.

[2] Printed in the Tauchnitz edition of *The Doubtful Plays of William Shakespeare* (1869).

both by Shakspere. For *Locrine* is by no means devoid of merit, though hardly of a kind resembling that belonging to any of Shakspere's undoubted plays. The versification of *Titus Andronicus* seems to me to indicate a more advanced stage than that of *Locrine*, where with few exceptions there is an absence of feminine endings, and where the lines are formed alike, each line being as a rule a sentence or the clause of a sentence. Altogether *Locrine* in manner resembles Peele rather than any other dramatist with whom I am acquainted[1]. The exuberant tendency of its author to classicisms likewise recalls Peele. The comic scenes are very fresh and laughable, and, unless this play is Shakspere's, tell against Ulrici's assertion that there was no contemporary author who could have written the comic scenes in the *First Part* of *The Contention* except Shakspere himself. There is by the bye a resemblance in *Locrine* (iv. 1) to the scene in *Henry VI, Part III*, in which King Edward woos Lady Grey (iii. 2).

The source of *Locrine* is Holinshed, based on Geoffrey of Monmouth. Its plot is developed with the utmost simplicity. The dying King Brutus divides his kingdom among his sons Locrine, Camber, and Albanact. After his death it is invaded by Humber 'King of the Scythians' and Hubba his son. Humber defeats and kills Albanact, and is in his turn defeated by Locrine. But that hero falls in love with Humber's wife Estrild, deserting his own wife and cousin Guendolen. Her kinsmen make war upon him; but he clings to Estrild, as Antony clings to Cleopatra, and both die together. The comic scenes are principally carried on by Strumbo a cobbler, who is pressed to the wars (in which he conducts himself like Falstaff), and his servant Trompart. The several acts are introduced by dumb shows, each applied parable-wise to Latin mottoes or proverbs by Ate, who does duty as 'presenter.' Ghosts abound in the play; and its language is a 'Pyriphlegethon' (to use a word which the author specially affects) of sounding

[1] I believe that Dyce has pointed out a passage recurring in Peele, though I cannot find the reference.

words, and of classical allusions in which not only the Britons as descended from the Trojans justifiably indulge, but which the 'Scythians' dispense with equal liberality. A terrific passage in *Locrine* is ridiculed in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (iii. 1); and another in Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn* (iii. 1).

There is no reason to ascribe the play to Shakspere[1].

Edward III (pr. 1596).

The next in date of these 'doubtful' plays is in my opinion the most remarkable of their number. *The Raigne of King Edward the Third*[2]: *As it hath bin sundry times plaied about the Citie of London*, was first printed, anonymously, in 1596; a second edition appeared in 1599; others would seem to have followed in 1609, 1617, and 1625. The popularity of the subject, and very probably of the play, is further attested by a ballad 'Of King Edward III and the Faire Countess of Salisbury,' setting forth her 'constancy and endless glory,' noticed by Halliwell as printed in Evans's *Old Ballads* (1810), ii. 301; Halliwell says that 'there is one, *if not more*, early play on the same subject.' See *Notices of Popular Histories* (of which there is one without date on this subject) in *Percy Soc. Publ.*, vol. xxiii. The 'fabulous' Countess of Salisbury is thought by Dyce possibly to be the 'English Countess' referred to in Fletcher's *The Nice Valour* (i. 1).

A more general attention seems first to have been directed to this play by Capell, who published it in his *Prolusions* (1760) as 'a play thought to be writ by Shakespeare'; Steevens treated the suggestion with contempt; and though a translation of it appeared in Tieck's *Vier Schauspiele von Shakespeare* (1836), it would seem that not only was Tieck not himself the translator, but that he

[1] A view, recalling one suggested in reference to Shakspere's *Sonnets*, has been broached by Mr. R. Simpson (in a recent review in *The Academy* of W. Bernhardi's study on Greene), to the effect that Shakspere 'interpolated passages from Greene and Peele into the stilted and tedious old tragedy of *Locrine*,' just as he wrote a comedy in Marlowe's style 'who had no comedy in his composition,' and thus produced the first sketch of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This species of ingenious hypothesis is however one in which it may prove dangerous to indulge too liberally.

[2] Edited by Delius, *u. s.*, vol. i.

was not responsible for the publication of the volume (cf. H. von Friesen, *Edward III, angeblich ein Stück von Shakespeare*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. ii, 1867). Shakspere's authorship of the play is maintained by Ulrici; Delius obviously inclines in the same direction, though not venturing in the absence of all external evidence to arrive at a positive conclusion. H. von Friesen, the author of the essay just quoted, while pointing out many parallel passages and allowing the high merits of the play, arrives at the conclusion that it lacks the originality of great genius, and fails to exhibit the full perception of the meaning of history, to which Shakspere had attained in the probable period of its composition. The parallel passages he accordingly explains as at least to some extent due to reminiscences in Shakspere of the work of another. It may be added that the source of the first two acts is a novel in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, that of the last three Holinshed, who follows Froissart. Paynter and Holinshed were of course among Shakspere's most familiar resorts for his materials.

The great defect of the play is the want of harmony between its parts, which are only linked together chronicle-fashion, the later acts (iii–v) containing not more than a single direct reference to the main action of the earlier. But I cannot see in this any decisive argument against the Shaksperean authorship of at least part of this play; there would be nothing improbable in the supposition that he made use of an earlier piece, introducing the entire episode of acts i and ii, and modifying and altering the substance of the earlier play into his remaining acts. There is no evidence on the subject; but he might in his younger days have treated an *Edward III* as Delius supposes him in his maturity to have treated a *Pericles* (*vide ante*, p. 422).

The charm of the play in any case lies in the episode of Edward's love for the Countess of Salisbury. Shakspere's gallery of female characters is marvellously varied; yet it seems incomplete without the addition of the Countess of Salisbury, the true representative of high breeding united to moral purity. Bright and courteous in word and demeanour, she is as firm in her adherence to virtue as the

prude who has no answer but a shudder to the first suggestion of harm. She is the type of what the King acknowledges her to be, when her constancy has overcome his passion:—

> 'Arise, *true English lady:* whom our isle
> May better boast of, than e'er Roman might
> Of her, whose ransack'd treasury hath task'd
> The vain endeavours of so many pens' (ii. 2)—

a passage containing (as I find H. von Friesen has likewise noted) a curious incidental suggestion of the authorship of the play; for Shakspere had published his *Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, two years before *Edward III* was first printed.

But it is the exceeding beauty of passages of reflexion in this play which makes one unwilling to allow it to be dissociated altogether from Shakspere's name. Who is to be compared to him in the power of introducing reflexion into the most stirring passages of a dramatic action? And can this power be said to be anywhere more felicitously exhibited than in the second act of *Edward III*? On the many individual instances of the Shaksperean manner which this play seems to me to furnish, I must abstain from dilating, as well as on the recurrence in his undoubted dramas of thoughts to be found here. But the short speech of Queen Philippa (v. 1) will of itself recall to every reader one of the best known of all the beauties of Shakspere[1].

The last three acts are undoubtedly overcrowded with action; the scene in which the passage just referred to occurs is itself rather hurriedly worked out; but even here a hand resembling Shakspere's, if not his own, seems to have been at work to relieve the mere facts borrowed from the Chronicle, even where they are most conscientiously adopted. The versification of the play, with its frequent rhymes, appears fairly to accommodate it to the period of Shakspere's dramatic works to which it would belong. But it is only for the first two acts that I claim the honour

[1] 'Ah, be more mild unto these yielding men!
It is a glorious thing to 'stablish peace;
And kings approach the nearest unto God,
By giving life and safety unto men.'

of being recognised as wholly or at least substantially his. They are full of the conceits in which he indulged in his earlier period; but they are conceits of so happy and thoughtful a kind as not to contradict the theory suggested.

I find no notice of this play having ever been acted since the Elisabethan era; the stage of our own day has all but lost an actress whose gifts would have enabled her to present a perfect embodiment of the true English lady as conceived by Shakspere, or by an author whose promise must have approached that of Shakspere's own youth[1].

C. F. Weisse's *Edward III* (1759) appears to have no connexion with its English namesake.

Mucedorus (pr. 1598).

From *Edward III* it is a startling descent to pass to the play next in date of publication, if indeed *Mucedorus*[2], of which the first known edition belongs to the year 1598, had not been already previously printed. It was more than once reprinted—in 1621 with 'new additions,' consisting of a Prologue and an opening and a concluding dialogue between 'Comedy' and 'Envy.' Such was its popularity that it was acted by strolling players even during the period of the suppression of the theatres[3]. It was not ascribed to Shakspere in any of the early editions, the last of which was produced in 1668.

Tieck appears to have regarded *Mucedorus* as a juvenile work by Shakspere; but the fancy can only be described as a hallucination. The popularity of the play is easily explicable; not only is the buffoonery of 'Mouse the Clown' of the broadest kind, but its *dramatis personae* include (as

[1] Since writing the above (which I have preferred not to modify, in order that an opinion which I have long cherished may stand on the grounds on which it was formed), it has been a great delight to me to find that Mr. Collier (see *The Athenaeum*, March 28, 1874) confidently attributes *Edward III* to Shakspere. Mr. Fleay (see *The Academy*, April 25, 1874) holds that Shakspere is the author of the part from the King's entrance (i. 2) to the end of act ii, and supports his view by the application of tests of versification and diction.

[2] Printed in vol. ii of Delius' *Pseudo-Shakspere'sche Dramen*, vol. ii.

[3] On the occasion of a performance of *Mucedorus* at Witney in Oxfordshire in 1663 some persons lost their lives by an accident; and the catastrophe was 'improved' in a pamphlet entitled *Tragi-Comoedia*. Delius, citing Collier, ii. 118.—*Mucedorus* is mentioned among other favourite city plays in the Induction to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

if to respond to the Horatian tradition of the likings of the mob) a Bear, not to mention a Wild Man of the Woods. The action is simplicity itself, and the diction is even simpler than the action. Prince Mucedorus disguises himself as a shepherd and rescues Princess Amadine from the clutches of a bear, Segasto (to whom she was to be married) having saved his life by flight. She is hereupon about to elope with her preserver, when she falls into the hands of Bremo, a kind of Polypheme of the forest. From his favours she is saved by her lover, who has disguised himself as a hermit; and they then return to court, where on the arrival of his own anxious father Mucedorus reveals his identity. Throughout this delectable action are interspersed the humours of Mouse, which are in general extremely diverting[1]. But that Shakspere's hand ever came into contact with so infantinely rude a production, and left it as it stands, is quite out of the question[2].

The London Prodigal (pr. 1605).

With regard to *The London Prodigal* (1605), again, though belonging to a much more advanced species of the drama than *Mucedorus*, the speculation is, not whether it was written by Shakspere, but how it ever came to be accounted his. Yet Schlegel seems to incline to this view, and states that 'unless he mistakes, already Lessing judged this piece to be by Shakspere, and intended to bring it on the German stage[3].' Lessing's inclination towards the domestic drama, of which this play is an early specimen, is exemplified by some of his own works, and was fostered by the English drama of his own day. In the Elisabethan age it was, as will be seen, perhaps most successfully cultivated by Thomas Heywood, an extremely prolific author, to whom however there is no special reason for ascribing *The*

[1] From his first entrance onward: 'O horrible terrible! Was ever poor gentleman so scar'd out of his seven senses? A Bear? Nay, sure it cannot be a Bear, but some Devil in a Bear's doublet: for a Bear could never have had that agilitie to have frighted me.' The way in which Mouse 'falls over' the quick and the dead alike is worthy of a clown in a Christmas pantomime.

[2] See *e.g.* the speeches of Mucedorus, 'Behold the fickle state of man' and 'It was my will an hour ago,' as specimens of soliloquies which have been ascribed to Shakspere!

[3] *Lectures, &c.*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 238 (German).

London Prodigal. While the comic passages in this play appear to me not singularly happy[1], the pathos which it really possesses is to be found in the situations bringing before us the woes of the faithful Luce. She is a kind of patient Grissel, though her husband is by no means anxious for a happy result of his experiment. The diction of these scenes has, however, little pathetic power of its own. Altogether, though the play is coarse, its action is brisk enough (the dialogue is an intermixture of prose and verse). The plot might of course have been suggested by some anecdote of real life; and it is unnecessary to recall the treatment of similar subjects in different ways in early moralities. It is more instructive to notice an undoubted resemblance in the beginning of the plot, and in act i. sc. 1 more especially, to Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, where Charles Surface is the Prodigal; but the action takes an utterly different course, and there is no attempt in the old play to draw the dangerous moral half insinuated by Sheridan, although it is put forward in a crude form by the Prodigal's father at the opening of the play[2].

That *The London Prodigal* is Shakspere's seems an utterly untenable supposition; that he may have added an occasional touch, it would be difficult to disprove.

The Puritan (pr. 1607).

Our astonishment at Shakspere's having been credited with inferior productions of this description reaches its climax in the case of *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street.* It was published, with the initials W. S., in 1607, as acted by the children of St. Paul's—strange performers for such a play—who seem never to have acted any of the undoubted plays of Shakspere. The piece was obviously written by a member of one of the Universities, —an Oxford man, as is evident from an amusing passage

[1] The Prodigal's attempt at an Italian quotation is amusing (iii. 2): 'The Italian hath a pretty saying. *Questo*—I have forgot it, too; 'tis out of my head; but in my translation,' &c. There is a character somewhere in Dickens who, in attempting French conversation at dinner, never gets beyond '*Esker*' (*Est ce que*).

[2] 'Believe me, brother, they that die most virtuous, have in their youth lived most vicious; and none knows the danger of the fire more than he that falls into it.'



(i. 2), in which, as Dr. Farmer pointed out, the phraseology employed is Oxford phraseology[1]. A friend of Schlegel, well acquainted with Shakspere, thought that Shakspere in this play carried out a fancy of 'once in a way writing a play in the manner of Ben Jonson;' but Schlegel himself thinks that on this hypothesis a critical enquiry might have to go very far in the way of refinement[2]. Dyce[3] thinks that *The Puritan* was most probably written by Wentworth Smith, 'an industrious playwright,'—who was fortunate in his initials.

This comedy, which is said to take its second title from an old ballad, is a coarse caricature of the 'respectable middle-class,' and of their religious party; its hero is George Pyeboard, *i.e.* Peele, so named in honour of the ribald *Jests* fathered upon the celebrated dramatist (*vide ante*, p. 204). At the close of the play a nobleman comes in as a kind of *deus ex machinâ*, a superior being who sets everything right by pointing out to the benighted inhabitants of the city the abject folly of their ways. The comedy in fact hardly rises above the level of a farce, and there is little or no strength in the characters either of the Puritans or of their dissipated besiegers. The play was obviously a hurried contribution, with which it is out of the question to discredit Shakspere, to the conflict which had early in James's reign once more arisen between the City and the stage,—a contribution not calculated to lessen the acrimony of the conflict in question.

Some real importance, so far as the question of Shaksperean authorship is concerned, attaches to *A Yorkshire*

[1] 'Troth, and for mine own part, I am a poor gentleman, and a scholar; I have been matriculated in the University, wore out six gowns there, seen some fools, and some scholars, some of the city, some of the country, kept order, went bare-headed over the quadrangle, eat my commons with a good stomach, and battled with discretion; at last, having done many sleights and tricks to maintain my wits in use (as my brain would never endure me to be idle), I was expelled the University, only for stealing a cheese out of Jesus College.'

The last touch is happily impudent; for the College in question has always had a close connexion with Wales.

[2] *u. s.*, p. 232.

[3] Introduction to Peele's *Works*.

A Yorkshire Tragedy (acted and pr. 1608).

Tragedy, a short piece in a single act, which was performed in 1608 at the Globe theatre and printed in the same year. It is the dramatisation of a horrible tale of murder. The event which it reproduces occurred in 1604, and is related in Stowe's *Chronicle*. After the fashion of those and of our own days, the story was at once turned into a ballad for popular consumption. My belief is that Shakspere's hand is traceable in portions of this play,—so more particularly in the Husband's speech, beginning '0 thou confused man' (sc. 4), and perhaps in the affecting scene with the little Boy following. On the other hand, the powerful situation in the concluding scene between Husband and Wife is inadequately worked out; and altogether it is not easy to believe that, at the time when Shakspere was composing the noblest works of his maturity, he should have condescended to so hasty an appeal to not wholly legitimate effect. Schlegel, who speaks of the tragic effect of this piece as overpowering, believed it to be by Shakspere; Hazlitt thought it more in Thomas Heywood's manner. I am inclined to suppose that it was not written by Shakspere, but that he inserted or re-wrote passages in it when it was represented in his theatre. If this be so, it would be curious if Shakspere had introduced the allusion to Leicester[1].

Two lines in the *Yorkshire Tragedy*—

> 'Divines and dying men may talk of hell,
> But in my heart her several torments dwell'—

are taken from Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592). The idea is also to be found in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (*vide ante*, p. 182).

[1] Sc. v: '*Husband.* I'll break your clamour with your neck. Down stairs; Tumble, tumble headlong. So—

[*He throws her down and stabs the child.*

The surest way to charm a woman's tongue,
Is—break her neck; a politician did it.'

The allusion of course is to the death of Leicester's first wife, said in a book called *Leicester's Commonwealth*, erroneously attributed to Father Parsons, to have been caused by her being by his orders thrown down stairs at Cumnor.



The Merry Devil of Edmonton (pr. 1608).

The Merry Devil of Edmonton[1] was ascribed to Shakspere on the mere *ipse dixit* of the bookseller Kirkman, to which there is the less reason to give credit, inasmuch as the first edition of the play (1608) did not even bear the initials of Shakspere, but those of 'T. B.' Tieck, who believed in Shakspere's authorship of this play, even assigned a date, 1600, to its composition; but this is in any case too late a year, notwithstanding a certain amount of resemblance to *The Merry Wives* (especially in the character of the host Blague), not to mention that the date of *The Merry Wives* itself is matter of dispute. The play was exceedingly popular; it was reprinted several times, and is referred to by Ben Jonson in 1616 as the 'dear delight' of the public[2]. Of late a Shaksperean authorship of the play has been maintained by Tieck's friend and biographer H. von Friesen (see *Flüchtige Bemerkungen über einige Stücke, welche Shakesp. zugeschrieben werden* in *Jahrbuch*, vol. i, 1865); but the editor of the *Jahrbuch*, Bodenstedt, considers the conclusions of his contributor 'very daring.' Parallel passages may be traceable, but this amounts to little in the way of evidence. I see no reason to ascribe this play to Shakspere. It is a mere farce,—the tale of a trick, sanctified by its good intention and happy ending, played by the hero of the piece upon an unkind father. This hero is a personage of the name of Peter Fabel, round whose tomb at Edmonton the legend hovered that after selling his soul to the Evil One, he contrived to beguile the purchaser,—that in fact his wit was too strong for that of the Fiend. Peter is said to have lived in the age of Henry VII, and to have received his education, which it is grievous to find he turned to such account, at Peterhouse, Cambridge.

The play has also been ascribed to Drayton, who has in

[1] Printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. v.

[2] See the Prologue to *The Devil is an Ass*:

> 'And show this but the same face you have done
> Your dear delight, *The Devil of Edmonton*.'

A different version of an episode in the story is referred to in *The Staple of News* (i. *ad fin.*).

his *Polyolbion* described the localities over which Fabel makes his 'spirits dance their nightly jigs[1].'

The Life and Death of Thomas Cromwell (pr. 1613; entered 1602).

The Life and Death of Thomas Lord Cromwell in a sense connects itself with the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, the authorship of which has been already pointed out. As the latter was probably written to make capital out of Shakspere's mistake in turning Oldcastle into a comic figure, so the former, as has been suggested by Malone, was probably reprinted in 1613, with the initials W. S. (there is no copy of an edition entered in 1602 extant), in order to take advantage of the popularity of Shakspere's *Henry VIII*, acted as a 'new play' in the same year. W. S. may have been Wentworth Smith; he certainly was not William Shakspere, who could not possibly have produced so poor a play. It may however, as a series of biographical scenes,—which are connected by means of a Chorus,—have produced a lively sensation. For materials the author seems, besides Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, to have used a novel of Bandello's (see Simrock, ii. 324 *seqq.*), which Shakspere could not be supposed to have done in a work written in the period of his maturity, and connecting itself in subject with the entire series of his dramas from English history. But though Schlegel declares this play (together with the *First Part of Oldcastle* and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*) to be 'not only undoubtedly by Shakspere, but to belong, in my judgment, to his maturest and most excellent works,' I venture to think the whole tone of the play infinitely beneath the poet to whom it has been ascribed[2].

Fair Em (pr. 1631).

The solitary piece of external 'evidence' on which *Fair Em*[3] (printed 1631) has been ascribed to Shakspere is the circumstance that Garrick's collection contained 'a volume, formerly belonging to King Charles II, which was lettered

[1] See Lamb's kindly tribute to the 'Panegyrist of his native earth,' in a note to a passage from this play in his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*.

[2] See Schlegel, *u. s.*, and cf. the speech in which Cromwell takes leave of life and fame (v. 5) with Wolsey's farewell in *Henry VIII*. Schlegel's fallibility is indeed a warning to critics!

[3] Printed in Delius, *Pseudo-Shakspere'sche Dramen*, vol. ii (1874). It is translated in Tieck's *Shakspeare's Vorschule*, vol. ii. Tieck is inclined to regard it as a juvenile work by Shakspere.



on the back, "*Shakespeare*, vol. i," and consisted of *Fair Em* and other doubtful plays.' (See Malone, ii. 682, *note*.) It has also been attributed to Greene, whose *Friar Bacon* it resembles in more than one point. That however this resemblance is the result of Greene's having been the author of *Fair Em* is a conclusion improbable in itself, and to some extent contradicted by external evidence. In the *Epistle* prefixed to Greene's *Farewell to Folly* (entered 1587, printed 1591), he appears to refer to two passages from this very play after so contemptuous a fashion as all but absolutely to exclude the possibility of his having been its author. (See W. Bernhardi, *Robert Greene's Leben und Schriften*, 1874, where the *Epistle* is quoted from Collier, ii. 441.) Possibly however the passages cited may have been plagiarised by the author of *Fair Em*. The play has likewise been attributed—I do not know whether on other than general grounds—to Lodge.

For the rest, Tieck thought the play might have been a juvenile work of Shakspere's, but that it was too feeble to be attributable to either Marlowe or Greene. Delius has sufficiently exposed this backwards-and-forwards method of criticism. On the other hand (unless the evidence of the passages referred to be considered decisive), there is considerable force in the observation of Charles Knight, that the play in both versification and construction seems to belong to a period later than Greene's, and that its double plot points rather to the period of Beaumont and Fletcher. Indeed there is no more striking example than *Fair Em* of a play made up of two plots which remain virtually quite distinct from one another to nearly the close of the action. Such a method of construction is in itself feeble and unlike Shakspere, who often constructed hastily, but rarely or never thoughtlessly. And in *Fair Em* it is moreover difficult to decide which of the two plots is in itself feebler—whether that about William the Conqueror, who sails to Denmark to win one lady, falls in love with a second, and finally espouses the first; or that about Fair Em, the daughter of the supposed miller of Manchester, who, loyal to one lover, pretends to be deaf in order to escape a second, and blind

in order to escape a third, but unluckily thereby estranges the first, and is in the end fain to accept one of his rivals. This double series of cross purposes is however more agreeably carried out, so far as diction is concerned, than might be supposed; and there is at least one passage in the play worthy of a more than ordinary hand[1]. The hero of the comic scenes, which are of the conventional kind, is Trotter the miller's man. Altogether there is no reason to connect this play with Shakspere's name.

The Two Noble Kinsmen (pr. 1634).

The play of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (for a notice of which *vide infra*, under the works of Fletcher) was in the edition of 1634, when it was first published, ascribed to Fletcher and Shakspere, a conjunction *a priori* improbable, for Fletcher cannot be shown to have begun writing for the stage before 1606–7, when it is hardly likely that Shakspere would have joined him in the composition of a drama. It might however be, as Dyce suggests, that Shakspere remodelled an old play called *Palamon and Arsett* (1594), and that Fletcher afterwards produced another version, in which he retained all of Shakspere's 'additions,' though 'tampering with them here and there.' The internal evidence in favour of the supposition is certainly very strong. Dyce remarks that the probability of Shakspere's having contributed to this play is supported not only by the 'enormous' style of the conception of several scenes (he notes v. 1–3; here however it may be observed that Chaucer was specially suggestive), but also by the 'enormous' style of versification, so different from Fletcher's, which they exhibit. The delicate instinct of Charles Lamb likewise traces parts of the play to a probable Shaksperean authorship[2]. A close examination of the play led the late Mr. S. Hickson, in an essay in the *Westminster Review* (April 1847), to the conclusions that 'the play of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is one to which Shakspere possesses a better title than can be *proved* for

[1] I mean Fair Em's rejection of the faint-hearted Manville in v. 2: 'Lay off thy hands, disloyal as thou art,' &c.

[2] See *Specimens*. He quotes, as probably Shakspere's, the magnificent i. 1, and Emilia's exquisitely tender speech i. 3.

him to *Pericles;* that to him belong its entire plan and general arrangement; but that, perhaps for want of time to complete it by a day named, and probably by way of encouragement to a young author of some promise, he availed himself of the assistance of Fletcher to fill up a portion of the outline.' He regards as Shakspere's 'the whole of the first act, with the exception of some twenty or thirty lines; likewise the first scene of the second act; the first and second scenes of the third act; the last scene of the fourth act; and, with the exception of the second scene, the whole of the fifth act. As a consequence of this it follows, that, with the partial exception of Arcite, every character, even to the doctor who makes his appearance at the end of the fourth act, was introduced by Shakspere. We have here then,' he continues, 'not only the framework of the play, but the groundwork of each character; in each case we find that Shakspere goes first, and Fletcher follows; and even then we find that the latter is the most successful in the parts where he had Chaucer for a guide.' Mr. Hickson's paper has been reprinted by the new Shakspere Society, with a confirmatory note by Mr. Fleay, applying to the several scenes the feminine-ending 'test.' But notwithstanding this weight of authority, it is difficult to believe that Shakspere should have either copied himself, or allowed himself to be copied by a dramatist whom he aided, to such an extent as is the case in *The Noble Kinsmen. Hamlet* (in iv. 1), the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (in iii. 5), *Love's Labour's Lost* (*ib.*), and as Hazlitt pointed out, *Cymbeline* (in ii. 1, cf. *Cymbeline*, iii. 3), have all been laid under contribution, and I am not sure whether the passages enumerated exhaust the list. Moreover the versification of scenes attributed to Shakspere by both Mr. Dyce and Mr. Hickson has even several of the trisyllabic endings which Fletcher peculiarly affected.

H. von Friesen (in *Jahrbuch,* vol. i, 1865) has given other reasons for doubting that Shakspere was associated in the production of a play so different from the works of his maturity. The frequent change of scene and the abundance of soliloquies are certainly arguments in this

direction. At the most, I should be ready to suppose that Shakspere aided the young dramatist in the opening of the play. Colour is lent to the supposition of so unusual an assistance by the tone of the Prologue (the play was acted at the Blackfriars) in its last lines[1], which indicate that the necessity of success was specially felt by the actors.

The History of Cardenio (acted 1613).

It may here be added that a play acted in 1613 under the title of *The History of Cardenio* (taken from *Don Quixote*) was entered on the Stationers' books in 1653 as the joint production of Fletcher and Shakspere, but never given to the press. It has been thought that this was the play published by Theobald in 1728 under the title of *The Double Falsehood;* but Dyce thinks this to have more probably been by Shirley[2].

The Birth of Merlin (pr. 1662).

Lastly, *The Birth of Merlin, or, The Child hath found his Father*[3], was published as the joint production of Shakspere and William Rowley by the booksellers Kirkman and Marsh in 1662. The authority of those enterprising tradesmen may be safely rejected. Whatever may be thought of Rowley's claims to the paternity of this play, I cannot believe that Shakspere was associated with him in so extraordinary a production. It is a dramatic version of the legend according to which Merlin received his gift of prophesy directly from his father, who was no other than the Devil himself. The father and son finally contend for the mastery; and the former is duly worsted, being shut up in a rock by means of a terrific curse couched in tolerably elegant Latinity (v. 2). After performing this feat, Merlin promises to his much-exercised mother a quiet, though repentant, old age and a monument after death on Salisbury plain. The story of 'Uter Pendragon's' wanderings is mixed up with the main action; and thus a strange medley of romance and farce is the result,

[1] 'If this play do not keep
A little dull time from us, we perceive
Our losses fall so thick, that we must leave.'

[2] See Introduction to Dyce's *Works* of Beaumont and Fletcher, p. xliii.

[3] Printed in the Tauchnitz edition of the *Doubtful Plays* (1869).



containing indeed occasional touches of vigorous character-drawing and signs of decided originality, but altogether of so rough and rude a texture that the possibility of Shakspere's participation in the piece is out of the question. A certain poetic beauty cannot be denied to attach to the figure and the conduct of the Prince; but the conflict in him between duty and passion displays none of the psychological depth which Shakspere could hardly have failed to reveal. I see no necessity for any lengthy remarks on the treatment of a subject so closely connected with that of Spenser's masterpiece [1] by a dramatist whose design seems to have fallen short of the poetic conception of a poetic theme, while his execution, though vigorous, is so coarse as to give a burlesque air to much of his drama. Shakspere at least could never have taken part in a work which after so rude and coarse a fashion ventured on the same kind of ground as that familiar to his own airy step. The merits of this brisk and bustling play are undeniable; there is a certain genuine freshness in the character of the marvellous boy Merlin,—born with the beard and the wisdom of a man. But had Shakspere addressed himself to this part of the Arthurian legend, he would hardly have contented himself with dressing it up in this way for the gratification of the groundlings. Finally, this play appears to contain no passage in which, as in parts of *Arden of Feversham*, of *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, perhaps of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and most notably of *Edward III*, one cannot, as it were, escape from recognising the touch of an incomparable—and, as one would fain believe, an unmistakeable—hand.

Limited scope of the ensuing remarks.

The few remarks which I proceed to offer on the dramatic genius of Shakspere are made only from particular points of view—from those in which I may with the least presumption seek to place myself. In the case of a genius

[1] The earliest record of William Rowley appears to belong to the year 1610; so that if this play was by him, Spenser's *Faerie Queene* had doubtless been long published when *The Birth of Merlin* was produced. Cf. Barron Field's Introduction to *Fortune by Land and Sea* (*Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1845), p. vi.

such as Shakspere the best that any one reader can attempt is to study it from as many points of view as are open to him,—not indeed disregarding or rashly undervaluing the significance of the rest, but contented with the certainty that even to the swiftest perception and to the most conscientious research many veins of treasure must remain closed. When Goethe was aging, he wrote his autobiography, and called it *Truth and Poetry*. Intentionally ambiguous as the title is, it doubtless conveys the fact that even he who commanded and controlled his own being with a serene consciousness rarely given to mortal man, had already lost part of himself, and lost it as he knew irrecoverably. What Goethe could not do for himself, no critic will do for the genius of Shakspere. But every true student labouring according to his province, will add to the progress of a work which is not the less productive because it is interminable. I need hardly say that these remarks are far from being intended to imply that in critically studying Shakspere those will succeed best who are merely intent upon connecting him with the particular branch of enquiry to which habit or inclination may have accustomed them, like the later classical mythologists who, unable to conceive the idea of a Jupiter with various attributes, divided what they could not comprehend, and created a multiplicity of (parchment) Jupiters of different kinds and with different characteristics. This species of critical labour may be incidentally productive of interesting results, but these will never amount to a contribution to what is the end of all true criticism,—a more perfect appreciation of that which is, as distinct from that which is not, essential to genius.

I propose then to touch briefly upon the influences which the great national currents of Shakspere's age appear to me to have exercised upon some of his dramatic works, and upon the direction in which they seem to have led,—not forced,—part of his creative activity. With these may be connected a few further observations on the way in which Shakspere regarded history, and more particularly the history of his own country. I will then dwell with even

greater brevity upon one or two other aspects of his genius as a dramatist, and of its relation to the forms of dramatic art which he found and those which he adopted.

Shakspere and his times.

With regard, then, to the first of these particular branches of a vast subject, no endeavour would be more futile than an attempt to demonstrate that the political and social tendencies of Shakspere's age made him what he is—the greatest dramatic poet of modern times. Not the genius of Shakspere, not even any one of the characteristic features of that genius, is due to the Elisabethan era; but much would have been otherwise in his works, had he written them in another age and under the conditions of a different political and social life.

The great English Revolution preparing itself.

We look upon Shakspere across a great gulf of time, which is not measured by the number of centuries which has elapsed since the period of his life and death. The England of the present day is a different England from his, and has altered more than the little town where the Avon still flows by its green banks, more even than the ancient precinct where the clamour of the theatre has been succeeded by the thunder of the press. At what period England ceased to be Merry England, or whether it has ever ceased to be such, may be left open questions; doubtless the Jaqueses are not more melancholy now than they were when the Forest of Arden sheltered outlaws and deer-stealers, and the Audreys are as light of heart and as easily wooed as they were in the days of the poet who drew their type. The main distinctions of character remain the same now as then; and their dramatic embodiments belong to no one age more than to another. But the gulf which separates us from the Elisabethan age is the great Revolution, which gave the first and the fullest expression to the great religious movement under the influences of which every Englishman, whether consciously or unconsciously, still lives and acts and thinks.

Of that movement the premonitory symptoms had indeed long made themselves perceptible, and the first palpable

signs of its striving for predominance appeared in the very reign which comprised the greater part of Shakspere's literary labours. It was growing apace in the next reign, in a period of his life when the tranquil ease of his retirement might have enabled him to observe its growth, without being any longer sensibly touched by its progress in his own worldly interests. But to the significance of that movement he, as well as the great body of those with whom age and habits of life would most naturally bring him into intellectual contact, seems to have remained a stranger.

It was all but inevitable that it should be so. There was no influence from within to lead Shakspere to sympathise with the Puritan movement; for his genius, sure of itself, had expanded its growth and winged its flight free from dependence upon any school of thought or sect of belief; while the outward circumstances of his life placed him in direct opposition to the outward manifestations of the coming change. Least of all could such knowledge as reading can supply have furnished him with the materials for estimating the significance of contemporary phenomena or the symptoms of the great movement which was preparing itself. A great popular revolution capable of transforming a nation was beyond the actual range of his experience, and the meaning of its beginnings was beyond the possible scope of his observation.

The nation unsettled by the Wars of the Roses

For what had the wars of York and Lancaster, which he celebrated in so many dramas, been to the people? A change from master to master, to which the spiritual (who were at the same time the chief intellectual) guides of the people had remained essentially indifferent, by which its material prosperity was checked, and under which the growth of its political consciousness had been actually thrown back. What had the Reformation, on which he had to touch in his *Henry VIII*, and which at least one previous dramatic writer had contrived to bring into so intimate a connexion with the theme of *King John*, been to the people? A removal of foreign intrusion into the

and the Tudor Reformation.



government of the national Church, and of foreign claims upon the national pocket:—with these results the great body of the population were well content, as its ancestors had for centuries desired them. A despoiling of abbots and monks for the benefit of a limited number of fortunate families:—herein the bulk of the nation acquiesced, after much agitation among those classes who had been immediate losers by the reform. A series of changes of belief, or rather (for why misuse the term?) of changes of dogma:—by these the great majority of the population had been in the reign of Henry VIII surprised, in the reign of Edward VI bewildered, in the reign of Mary (when the reaction was associated with real dangers of foreign influence) terrified. What to believe, what not to believe, had at times been for the mass of the people a matter almost as hard to remember as to understand. So much however is clear: that neither the arbitrary oscillations of Henry, nor the Calvinistic reforms of Edward, nor again the Catholic reaction of Mary, had brought any freedom in the matter of their spiritual beliefs to the people at large. Again, the whole social system of the land had been unhinged. The old nobility whose ranks had been thinned by the Wars of the Roses had been forced to make room by its side for a new race of new men, pushing and intriguing, eager for change because in change alone was for them to be found the opportunity for advancement. The jealous pride of the old houses, and the eager ambition of the new men, equally disturbed the political atmosphere; the times were hot and troublous; all power claimed a risk; and success now came only to the swift and the strong.

The national life and the national consciousness expand in Elisabeth's reign.

And then Elisabeth ascended the throne, not unconscious of her task, but long doubtful of the means by which it was to be accomplished. At last the accumulation of dangers abroad and at home, from which the Queen could no longer hesitate to free herself and her people, and the inevitable necessity that she should either choose the part which her great counsellors urged upon her, or fall a helpless victim into the grasp of Spain, made her the representative of the policy with which we credit her name.

Herself comparatively indifferent to many of the questions for which men had contended and suffered on either side, she was in the matter of the national creed willing to let the basis be broad; but from it she would allow none of her subjects to swerve. Narrowly national in its conception, her system of policy was at last forced to become broadly Protestant in its influence upon the general affairs of Europe. Now, all the vigour of the land was directed into a channel sufficient to give it full opportunity for healthy exercise; the independence of the land had to be asserted against its foreign foes; and thus in the throes of a life-struggle was born the greatness of England. The desire for action which a selfish desire of gain had helped to create, and which might have been frittered away in mere adventure, was thus transmuted into a generous impulse of patriotic self-sacrifice; the men who would have been intriguing for self-advancement or roving in quest of gold, became the true chivalry of Gloriana; and from among buccaneering mariners and soldiers of fortune, as well as from the hardier remnants of the old nobility and gentry of the land, were drawn the truest champions of the cause which they identified with the name of the Virgin Queen.

The crisis of 1587–8.

The time of Shakspere's first contact with public life (if it be legitimate to regard as such his arrival in London from the country) cannot have been far distant from the date marking the resolution of the English government to front the great danger which had been so long evaded. It can hardly have been long either before or after the beginning of the year 1587 that Shakspere became a resident in the capital. About the same time on the great stage of English public life the catastrophe in the drama had at last been reached; the long and tedious complication had at last been unknotted — by the headsman's axe. On February 8, 1587, took place the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. It is known how long and how urgently the step now taken had been counselled by Elisabeth's trustiest advisers, how they had warned her that there was no peace for her, no security for her throne, no safety for her life, so

long as the false Duessa lived, more dangerous behind her prison-bars than when she had roamed in the wild licence of liberty and power. And it is known that powerful impulses habitual to Elisabeth had combined to prolong her hesitation:—the firm belief which she held in the sanctity surrounding an anointed head, the aversion which she entertained for all revolt, successful or unsuccessful, such as had driven Mary across the Border into her own untender hospitality,—and besides these the difficulty which Elisabeth at all times felt in arriving at a fixed resolution, and the delight which she took (for the *lues diplomatica* was strong in all the Tudors) in balancing probability against probability and power against power. Now, the die was cast; and the player who had thrown it was for a while trembling as she averted her eyes from the critical venture, was denying her responsibility for the act which she had ordered, was sheltering herself behind subterfuges in the efficiency of which her own instincts could hardly allow her to trust. For she knew that Mary Stuart had left the legacy not only of her plots but of her wrongs —and of this the last and the most terrible of them all—to an avenger whose patience had been tried beyond the limits of callousness, who lacked neither the will nor the power, nor pretexts multitudinous, for striking the retributive blow. The year 1588 brought the Spanish Armada into the narrow seas. Thus if ever we are justified in speaking of a crisis in a nation's history, this was a crisis, such as she has rarely known before or since, in the history of England.

Others less happy than Shakspere in their times:

And let it be remembered what had up to this time been the nature of the relations between Elisabeth and those spirits among her subjects whose energy was swifter than hers, whose courage was prompter, whose resolution was not like the Queen's, one which 'let I dare not wait upon I would.' It is not of her great statesmen that I am speaking,—not of Burghley, sickened more than once by the apparent hopelessness of his endeavours to rouse the Queen to an insight into the true difficulties and real demands of her position, nor of Walsingham, ready to meet intrigue by intrigue, and,

sternly Puritan at heart, to spin round friends and foes the threads of Spanish or Italian practice,—not even of Leicester, vainglorious and selfseeking, but willing to dare for himself and the Queen what she would dare for neither.

Spenser.

But I am rather recalling the experiences of such a poet as Spenser, fully awake to the fact that his lot had fallen in an age of great hope and great promise, and nursing his belief in the great mission of Gloriana and her knights. But how had he been obliged to accommodate, if I may use the expression, his aspirations to the tortuous variations of a policy which he must often have lacked the means of fathoming; how had he been driven to depict Elisabeth and Mary now as friends, and now again as foes; how had he seen his own political chief mistrusted and misjudged; how, in a word, had vague hopes and fears filled his poetic dreams before he could bring forth into the light of day his verified conception of a Queen who sent out her knights to do deeds worthy of themselves and of her immortal name!

Sidney.

Or again, I am thinking of the gentlest and most generous of all those knights, the Calidore of the Elisabethan chivalry, Sir Philip Sidney. What hopes, what longings had animated the morning—which no evening was to succeed—of that noble life, and how had it ended, how had it been sacrificed!—in the petty defence of a great cause, in a half-war carried on by a half-policy, in a paltry and futile skirmish ventured by Englishmen burning to do a deed worthy of their country, even should that deed be a desperate stroke leading to nothing but an honourable death.

The influence of the times in accordance with the comprehensiveness of Shakspere's genius.

But when Shakspere came into contact with the centre of our national life, the day of full action had arrived at last. At such a time, it may be said, the nation was on fire. At such a time its most active elements, which at crises like these always come to the top if a nation still possesses men, were all astir to supply the leaders and the soldiers and sailors for the contest. This was no longer a season for weighing the claims of faction, for balancing the considerations of political or of religious tenets. We are ignorant as to whether Shakspere's maternal blood may



have originally inclined him to sympathise with the martyrs whom his own county and his own mother's family had furnished to the cause of Rome; but the time had now gone by when any one but a traitor could hesitate between the claims upon his sympathy of the cause of his Queen and nation and those of any ecclesiastical system. It is a familiar fact how a Catholic noble led out the English fleet which awaited and beset the coming of the Armada; it was no sacrilege in the eyes of the brave Lord Howard of Effingham, risking his life and spending his substance, to fire a broadside into the galleons which bore the images of St. Philip or St. George on their gilded prows. No man whose youth falls in such a time, whose imagination, when for the first time it comes into contact with the great currents of public life, is fed by such events as these, is likely to allow his mind to be narrowed once more—least of all, if the tendency of that mind is neither eclectic nor sectarian, but comprehensive and sympathetic. Thus, so far as we can judge, the influence of the times in which Shakspere began his public life must have contributed to give him that firmly and unhesitatingly national spirit which he shares with all the representative minds of the England of his age, and to encourage and confirm that breadth of view—due in its primary origin to his idiosyncrasy—which has so confounded the well-meant endeavours to find in him a demonstrative Roman Catholic or a Bible Protestant eager to testify. English, with a joyous heartiness equalled by no other of our poets (unless it be Chaucer, who lived under the influence of a not wholly dissimilar epoch), he brings before us the age when England had once more reason to glory in the generous gift of Heaven, which had made her 'of little body with a mighty heart.' No mind is too great for national feeling of this kind; but for religious antipathies there was no place in Shakspere's heart, and this element, so strong in Spenser, is utterly absent from his contemporary. The influence of the times is not the primary cause of this absence, but could hardly have acted otherwise upon the mind of a Shakspere.

But this is only one aspect of the influence which may

The eagerness and earnestness of the times

be ascribed to Shakspere's times upon the spirit of his creative activity. If the period in which his entrance into public life fell was one of a noble enthusiasm, it was also one of hot and eager excitement. Something has been already said on this subject in discussing the characteristics common to most of his predecessors in our dramatic literature; and it will suffice to advert to it very briefly here. The enjoyments of life—and it is not at such times that men seem least inclined to enjoy their lives, particularly if they belong to a full-blooded race whose vigour is far from having been expended—were snatched hastily and feverishly. Literature had hitherto been to a great extent regarded as an elegant pastime, and love-making had frequently been carried on with the leisureliness befitting a literary exercise. But though room continued to be left for the more courtly or academical forms of literary productions, and though love-poetry is as undying as love-making, efforts of this description had ceased to satisfy the imagination of an age which was so irresistibly directed to very different themes. When the Continent seemed a battle-field, when every vessel that unshipped its booty-laden crew in a Devon port brought home tidings, and proofs as well as tidings, of ships sunk and cities sacked by the bold adventurers of the main, the eye and the ear of London could no longer occupy themselves more than occasionally with the pretty conceits of sonnets addressed by the lover himself, or by his literary friend on his behalf, to the fastidious fair, or with the reproduction of classical legends seductively decked in voluptuous imagery. In this period accordingly fall the efforts of the predecessors of Shakspere's maturity, the Kyds and Marlowes in whom it cannot be doubted he found his first models for his efforts as a dramatist. As Marlowe left his *Hero and Leander* uncompleted, so Shakspere may be supposed to have kept back his *Venus and Adonis*, or at all events to have put aside such labours, except in the moments of leisure. The public of his theatre called for other matter—for a *Titus Andronicus*, a play so sanguinary that Kyd might have rejoiced to own it,—perhaps for an early sketch with the *plot*,

to some degree reflected in early Shaksperean works.



i.e. all the deaths, of *Hamlet;* perhaps for an adaptation of another author's labours on the history of the times of *Henry VI*, representing as stirringly as might be upon the stage all the bustle and turmoil of actual war. It was on such subjects, it can hardly be doubted, that the dramatist tried his 'prentice hand, working fast and eagerly, and breathlessly falling in with an insatiable demand.

The crisis

Soon, however—who would have thought how soon?—the crisis has passed. Inefficiently directed by its Government, and hampered by the parsimony, more inopportune than ever, of the Queen, who has not fully perceived the real significance of the danger till it is coming to an end, the nation has made its effort. The winds of Heaven have blown, and the Armada is dissipated. Spain can send forth no second like the first; and slowly the war begins to assume another aspect. Foiled by his revolted provinces, foiled by the politic Huguenot in France, the bankrupt giant can ill defend himself against the assaults of the foe whom he can no longer hope to crush. Before the century closes the arch-enemy Philip of Spain is dead.

Old tastes not extinguished, but strengthened;

Fully roused to a sense of its own strength, familiarised by experience with bold and heroic deeds, the nation comes forth from the struggle. It has not changed its nature in a span of years; but it has grown apace, and its whole being has expanded with marvellous rapidity. The old tastes have not been extinguished; the love of classical literature and the taste for that modern literature which connects itself most closely with the Renascence movement—the Italian—have survived; of the earliest comedies associated with Shakspere's name, one is taken, at least indirectly, out of Plautus, another, at least indirectly, from an Italian source. Instead of these tastes having been suppressed, the opportunity has arrived of strengthening and heightening them, as the perspective of Englishmen has been widened in many directions. The relations with France have become more intimate; what doubtless is a mere coincidence seems to testify to the fact in the strange creation of the fancy and a mixture of delicate playfulness with crudity of form which Shakspere dedicates to the love-

(see early Shaksperean comedies);

adventures of a legendary King of Navarre. More coyly than Italy or France, Spain begins to yield some of the treasures of her romance literature; nor is it easy to ascertain in all cases the precise source whence the drama derives this or that of its abundant themes. Meanwhile foreign travel and foreign discovery, with which the rise and growth of our maritime power are so inseparably connected, attract adventurous spirits by a wider range of temptations; there are not only the Spanish colonies to vex and worry, but there is the unlimited Beyond to which the Spanish settlements seem to point the way—the unexplored lands whose cities are built of gold, and whose kings are clothed in it, the whole wealth of the tropics beckoning from its endless forests for men to come and see and pluck its fruits. Upon the mirror of the most receptive and the most comprehensive of human imaginations falls the reflex of all these new acquisitions and aspirations of the national life. Perhaps the rude bustle of home politics, the trivial expression of controversies coming closely home to the business and bosoms of London, forcing their ugly turmoil even upon the stage, stays the hand of the dramatist engaged in reproducing with the joyous pliancy of youth the bright multitude of new impressions. He will recur to them again, working with a surer hand and a maturer judgment; but it is enough that the storehouses have been multiplied whence he will derive his materials at almost haphazard choice; and that an awakened England, an England with a range of associations infinitely more various and bold, is around him, prepared as it were to delight in his creations.

and widened.

Politics and the stage in too close contact.

But if the national mind had become more wide and diversified in its sympathies, yet there never had been, and never could have been, a time in which those sympathies were more generally and intensely directed towards the nation's own history. The greatness of England was now no phrase, no dream: it was a reality. If her armies had not as of old swept victoriously before them the chivalry of France, she was now feared by a power greater than that of France had ever been; her voice was heard and respected where it sounded on behalf of the rebellious subjects of

The sympathies of Englishmen more national than ever.

tyrants and bigots, and where it threatened vengeance for her own or her fellows' wrongs. Let any period of conscious and active patriotism be taken in the history of any nation, and in the popular literature of that period will be found the inevitable reflex of that spirit—sympathy with the national history. It was the age of Pericles to which Herodotus recited the glories won by Athens at Marathon and at Salamis; it was the age of Frederick the Great in which (much to the cynical wonder of that prince) the figure of the liberator Arminius once more came to have a meaning for the German nation. And so the great national age of the latter half of Elisabeth's reign was in truth a golden time for the most directly popular expression of the nation's historic sense—the English historical drama.

Shakspere's Histories harmonious in treatment.

Already the editors of the first folio edition of Shakspere's works recognised so marked a distinction between his plays taken from English history and those treating of other historical subjects, whether 'ancient' or 'modern,' that while they included the latter among the *Tragedies* at large, they printed the former as *Histories* in a separate group[1]. It will be obvious to any reader that the English plays are in their literary genesis a developement of those Chronicle Histories of which I have already traced the origin and growth; that the treatment of the subject in each has an epical element in it; that together they form a group connected with one another as chapters in one great book. That the entire group has an inner unity corresponding to that of a Greek trilogy, seems to be saying too much, although of course it is easy to treat the plays from *Richard II* to *Richard III* as one great whole, and to regard *King John* as the prologue and *Henry VIII* as the epilogue to the series. But there is sufficient evidence to show that Shakspere worked at the several plays from English history in anything but consecutive order, and there is not sufficient evidence to disprove the supposition that

[1] See a paper by Baron Friesen in the *Jahrbuch*, vol. viii, *Ein Wort über Shakespeare's Historien*. Ulrici's views, which I cannot examine at length, will be found in his *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art*.

he may have begun by the adaptation of the labours of others. And yet it remains true that he with wonderful tact gave to the entire series an inner harmony, such as has not unnaturally inspired commentators with the wish of proving it a symmetrically-constructed whole. This distinguishes his Histories from the endeavours in the same direction which had preceded them, and made it impossible for any subsequent hand to take up his work where he had left gaps in it, or to continue it from the point where he had ceased.

His materials for the Histories.

So far as his materials were concerned, Shakspere could of course only work with those which he had at his command. Any study of history of a broader and more independent kind than that which the chroniclers display was foreign to his times; it only began with their close. But a deep national interest in the traditions of the national history existed; and by this spirit he was moved in a degree unknown to any of his predecessors. The Tudor chroniclers lay open before him; and to their pages—above all to those of Holinshed—he resorted with ready trust for the materials of his Histories[1]. Now, these Tudor chroniclers

The Tudor chroniclers.

[1] It was doubtless the greater fulness of Holinshed, not any difference of spirit, which accounts for Shakspere's general preference of him over Halle. There is no more genuine Tudor chronicler than the latter; he is innocent of doubt in any case where the interests of his own country or those of its chosen dynasty are in question. See for instance his account of James I of Scotland, where it is quite incomprehensible to the English chronicler why the Scottish prince should have found aught to complain of in being detained for so many years as a prisoner by an English king, and how, when at last set free, he should have dared to enter upon a course of policy hostile to that of his generous entertainer; or, again, his account of the Maid of Orleans, in whom he can see nothing but a base and blasphemous witch. Halle's style is very downright and vivacious, and far from being affected by the tendency towards dignity and elaboration which characterises his predecessor Fabyan. The continuation of Halle by Grafton makes up by an abundance of details as to pageants and banquets for the brevity of comment necessary in touching upon the faithfully-chronicled acts of King Henry VIII. Holinshed's work is partly founded upon that of his predecessor Halle, but is far more ambitious in its design, and of much greater length in its execution. His full description of the social and natural condition of England abounds with details of the most varied interest; nor is it till he deserts the safe ground of the present and begins his account of the past, relying implicitly on doubtful authorities, that one is fain to agree with Shirley (*Hyde Park*, i. 2) as to 'the tedious tales of Hollingshed.' As he approaches the narrative of his own times, we have again the refreshing spirit

invariably composed their narratives in the interest of the Lancaster and Tudor dynasties; they deferred to authorities whose partiality is beyond dispute; and their public accepted these views with equal freedom from suspicion. At no time had the traditions of the dynasty to which Queen Elisabeth belonged possessed a claim to be so reverentially and confidingly received; and at no time was such a use made of the opportunity to consecrate them—as it were for ever—in the minds of the nation.

How far he was bound by them.

For though Shakspere never lost sight of the dramatic object of each of his works, yet it is not to be denied that in all his Histories the dramatic action is essentially determined in its characters and in its limits by the primary design of reproducing a definite chapter of the national annals. With a dramaturgic skill nowhere exhibited more abundantly than in these plays, he expands, compresses, and otherwise arranges his materials; but he is bound by them, as in the main he bases his characterisation on the hints derived from them.

Of this latter fact, with which I am here concerned rather than with the other, it will suffice to point to two examples. Shakspere's treatment of the characters of Richard III and Henry V respectively has determined the conception of these sovereigns by whole generations of Englishmen; but though stamped with the signature of creative genius, the evil demon of the House of York and the brilliant hero of the House of Lancaster are alike figures moulded by a master-hand from definite models.

Examples: Richard III

Richard III was the production, it cannot be doubted, of Shakspere's early manhood; it cannot be regarded as a juvenile work. Now what is the dramatist's view of the hero of his play? A prince of royal birth, but not so near to the throne as to be able to form any expectation of its reverting to him in the natural course of events. At the same time one whom nature has cheated of more than a

of personal feeling to give life to his writing; but even in the early periods he is frequently picturesque and dramatic, and in such passages as his account of the wars of Edward III in France we recognise at once how little it was necessary for a dramatist aiming at arousing a popular interest to add to the materials to be found here.

right of birth,—as he tells us at the very outset of the play (for he is his own *prologus;* the poet desires that no doubt whatever should remain as to the conception to be elaborated through the whole course of the tragedy),—one to whom it seems that villainy is his mission, inasmuch as for him there beckons not the happiness which awaits other men; who defiantly sets himself the task of struggling in spite of all the obstacles in his path to an end apparently far out of his reach, and who pursues that task restlessly and ruthlessly, by craft and by violence, by hypocrisy and by audacity, and at last falls in a conflict undertaken as it were against the whole world of order, law and virtue and of human affections and sympathies around him.

Such is Shakspere's Richard, who is therefore a true hero of tragedy. It is man struggling against society, the individual defying by the strength of his own intellect and will all the forces naturally banded together against such a rebellion, and succumbing at last, like the boar caught in the toils of the huntsmen, who strike down like a rabid cur the baffled lord of the forest[1].

Now, this figure of Richard was the poetic solution of a problem which to Shakspere's age could only be stated as he stated it. The figure of the vanquished King of the House of York was stereotyped as it had last appeared in a chronicle devoted to the interests of the House of Lancaster. The struggle in which he fell was the crisis of those dynastic wars which had ended by placing on the throne the line which still reigned in the person of its last representative the Virgin Queen,—what wonder then that her loyal subjects could not read enough, could not see enough of the catastrophe and of its central figure. Two plays preceding that of Shakspere—one in Latin, one in English—testify to the unflagging interest of the public in the subject. The sources of historical information were the chronicles of Halle and Holinshed, and the latter was the writer to whom Shakspere was beginning usually to have recourse. Holinshed's account of Richard elaborates two versions, the former treating him respectfully, and going down to

[1] 'The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead' (v. 4).

the death of Edward IV, the latter painting him in the blackest colours. The beginnings of the latter are recognisable as they appear in the *Third Part* of *Henry VI*, and thus it is clear that the popular conception of Richard III had already become fixed in Shakspere's youth[1]. The author of this second version was Sir Thomas More; and it is more than probable that his narrative of the lives of Edward V and Richard III was inspired, if not dictated in its Latin form, by Henry VII's intimate friend and minister, and Richard's strenuous adversary, Cardinal Morton.

This then is Shakspere's source. He and his contemporaries believed in the facts which as a dramatist it became his task to explain psychologically from the conception which he adopted of the character of Gloucester, and to weld into a dramatically consistent action. The touches which he added himself, the free way in which he dealt with chronology in order to condense and contrast his situations, are licences absolutely at the command of the dramatist; but the basis of the play was derived from a popular partisan view. This Shakspere adopted; and his power as a dramatist was exhibited, after a fashion unknown to any previous writer of national historical dramas, in combining with the popular conception of the character the exhibition of an action conformable to the character thus conceived. For, as Lessing says, it is the task of the tragic poet to show what the character *as he conceives it* must do under given circumstances; here both the character and the circumstances were given to the poet from without, and though (as there is good reason to believe) neither were in strict accordance with historical fact, he makes them a dramatic truth[2].

[1] Oechelhäuser, in his very interesting *Essay über Richard III*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. iii (1868), argues that the *Second* and *Third Part* of *Henry VI* and *Richard III* were contemporaneously designed by the poet, assuming with the majority of recent German critics that the old plays on which *Henry VI, Parts I* and *II*, were based, were written by Shakspere.

[2] One exception has been found in the famous scene in which Gloucester woos and wins Anne at her father's coffin (this last detail is a Shaksperean invention). The question as to the dramatic truth of this scene is best tested in the theatre; and not having recently enjoyed an adequate opportunity of studying it under these conditions, I feel it difficult to arrive at a definite

Henry V.

A less difficult task—had such a word as difficult existed for Shakspere, whose genius could contain and shape in its mould so vast a variety of ores—was the dramatic reproduction of the popular view of the hero of the Lancastrian dynasty, Henry V. In the spirit of this view the poet set about the composition of this play, of which indeed it may be said, in the well-known phrase of Sir Philip Sidney, that it 'moves the heart more than a trumpet[1].' It stirs, and is intended to stir, few emotions besides that of a rudimentary kind of patriotism. Taken in connexion with *Henry IV* and *Henry VI* it may reveal to the philosophical reader the necessity that its hero 'must varnish over the stain of his title with the splendour of his achievements; this object, seconded by his own spirit of heroic enterprise, led him to commence the great war with France, which however brilliant in its results, as long as he wielded the sceptre and the sword, became afterwards the plague and weakness of England, and by its long continuance almost destroyed for ever the prosperity of the two kingdoms[2].' But the primary object of its author was to nourish that spirit which believes, or believed, one Englishman to be worth half a dozen Frenchmen[3]. His secondary object was to exalt the glories of the dynasty which was in descent represented by the Tudor line. On the religious enthusiasm (which was in fact fanaticism) so

opinion.—But in general it must be conceded that it only needs the substitution of the word 'true' for 'authentic' to take the sting out of Ben Jonson's sarcasm (*The Devil is an Ass*, ii. 1):

> '*Fitz.* And Richard the Third, you know what end he came to.
> *Mur.* By my faith, you are cunning in the chronicle, sir.
> *Fitz.* No, I confess I have it from the playbooks,
> And think they are more authentic.'

[1] I write with the remembrance of an admirable performance of this play, produced in Manchester in 1872 by Mr. Charles Calvert, whose spirit and intelligence reflect honour upon the city of which we are inhabitants.

[2] Ulrici.

[3] King Henry can hardly forgive himself, but an English audience was doubtless quite ready to forgive him, the boast:

> 'My people are with sickness much enfeebled;
> My numbers lessen'd; and those few I have
> *Almost no better than so many French.*' (iii. 6.)



strangely united in Henry V's character to an utter contempt for his neighbour's rights he touches indeed, but uses it rather as an incidental motive of dramatic effect than as a main element of character. He is content to take the King upon the whole as he found him broadly drawn in Holinshed, and to leave aside, as the popular instinct leaves aside in a popular hero—Frederick the Great for instance—all nicer discrimination of moral qualities and of their curious combination. Doubtful or dangerous questions he overleaps with all the hardihood characteristic of popular tradition. He endeavours to suggest a specious excuse for Henry's readiness for war by following the insufficiently authenticated story of a clerical intrigue. He accounts for the King's summary dealing with the Cambridge-Grey-Scroope plot by adopting a still more doubtful tradition of the conspirators having been bribed by French gold. He depicts his hero as single-mindedly and praise-worthily intent upon military glory; and according as his nobles and soldiers participate in the impulse they are commended to a share in our sympathy with the splendid vigour of their royal leader.

Ideas of popular rights unfamiliar to Queen Elisabeth and her circle;

Yet if the age had been fully awakened to such historical antipathies and sympathies as these, to one thing its most prominent representatives as yet turned a deaf ear; and this was the political progress of the people[1]. A deaf ear, —inasmuch as that age itself was preparing the struggle which its successors were to carry to an issue. Elisabeth, whose despotism was acquiesced in by her nobility and flattered by her poets, regarded the great body of the population as children who were by nature in a state of perpetual infancy. She could not, for instance, at the very outset of her reign comprehend the difficulty which beset the endeavour to blend Catholics and Protestants in one national Church. She hated the disputes

[1] Some agreement will be found in the views here indicated rather than developed with those advanced by a much-abused recent German critic of Shakspere, Gustav Rümelin, in his *Shakespearestudien*. Whatever qualities his book may not possess, I venture to think that it does possess that of common sense.

about dogmas; and all recalcitrance against uniformity was to her foolishness. Even towards the end of her reign, when Parliament grew restive, when it was no longer possible to mistake the fact that a movement towards independence in thought and life was manifesting itself in Church and State, when in other words Puritanism and Democracy began to show signs of their existence as living ideas, she failed to appreciate their significance for the future; and if they disturbed her tranquillity, it seems to have been chiefly to the extent of affecting her temper. The poets of Elisabeth's reign, and the greatest of them among the rest, were no political seers. Nothing could be more absurd than to demand of them that they should have been such.

and to Shakspere.

To object to Shakspere's *King John* that it shows no perception of the significance, in its connexion with the political system of the Tudors, of *Magna Charta;* or to his *Henry VIII*, that it reveals no recognition of the political significance of Henry's Reformation, is to trifle with the necessary limits of his art. The gift of which he displays no signs was foreign to his sphere of creation, though not irreconcileable with it. Moreover, it was not one of which the circumstances of his career were likely to suggest to him the exercise. Those classes in which the tendencies adverted to were mainly at work, and through which they were in the end to prove victorious, were not the classes with which the dramatist was brought into vital contact. The Puritanism of London only met Shakspere in the form of the attempts of the City authorities to close the theatres; and in these attempts, though his natural dignity led him to abstain from meeting them by vulgar and abusive retorts after the fashion of his fellow-dramatists, he was not likely to recognise more than an oppressive desire to carry out rigid notions of public order. The anti-Puritanism of Shakspere shows itself (unless an isolated passage in *Henry VIII*, which may not be from his hand, be taken into account) most characteristically in such a sketch of character as that of Malvolio. Broad views and visions as to the future developement of popular claims and popular rights were unfamiliar to the historical authorities to



which Shakspere had access and to the social atmosphere in which he lived. If he felt some special interest in Essex's rebellion (there is no satisfactory proof that he felt any sympathy with it), who believes that the objects and motives of the foolish attempt in question were other than personal? Of popular rights, either in the ancient or in the modern conception of the term, Shakspere took little thought, except where they coincided with the rights of humanity. As for his having had an historical insight into the significance of the typical constitutional struggles of ancient Rome, this is a conclusion which I confess myself unable to draw from his *Coriolanus*[1]. The author whom he followed in those Roman tragedies, in which a distinguished modern critic sees comprehensive illustrations of great historical ideas and of whole historical periods, has been well described as owing his popularity 'first and chiefly to the clear insight which he had into the distinction between History which he did *not* write, and Biography which he *did*[2].' Shakspere's Roman plays seem to me, like the book on which they were founded, essentially heroic in their conception.

Coriolanus no argument to the contrary.

Although, then, Shakspere stood so near to the age of the Revolution, its approach cast no shadow before on his intelligence. And if in this he was no prophet, neither was the great Queen such, nor the statesmen who counselled her, nor even the philosophic Ralegh, who among the active politicians of the day was in spirit—perhaps in actual life—nearest to Shakspere. He looked upon the national history and upon the national life as upon what they had been from the days when the ordinary

[1] 'Its principal object is to illustrate the struggle of democracy and aristocracy, as the conflicting *principles* of a republican polity.' And again: 'The first of these two great cycles' [the Roman] 'brings before us the political history of the Roman people—the original of the modern European polity, in all its most essential moments. . . . . Although, properly speaking, *Titus Andronicus* does not belong to the historical pieces, it may nevertheless be classed with them, in so far as it does not depict any definite deeds or fortunes of persons, so much as a particular epoch in an historical colouring, and consequently, as it derives its true import and explanation from the character of the age, is itself semi-historical.' Ulrici.

[2] Archbishop Trench, *Plutarch*, p. 35.

freemen shouted 'Yea, yea' but never 'Nay, nay' in response to the resolutions of the Witenagemote[1], and what they remained in the days of the Tudors—the history and the life of a people which followed its natural leaders.

Shakspere's view of national history concentrated in the reign of Elisabeth.

The change had already begun, under the rule of a line no longer in sympathy with the great currents of feeling in the nation, when Shakspere was laid in his grave. There are no traces of any perception on his part of the change which the death of Elisabeth and the accession of James were to hasten. There is doubtless an allusion to the latter event in *Macbeth*, but none to its significance. And, whether or not the lines at the close of *Henry VIII* be from Shakspere's own hand, at all events this, the last of his English historical dramas, fitly concludes with a tribute to Elisabeth and the Elisabethan age in comparison with which that appended in honour of the new sovereign, however skilfully devised, sinks into insignificance. Thus it was the Elisabethan age proper which, in so far as the genius of Shakspere was in its creative activity under the influence of his times, mainly contributed to inspire his views of the national life,—the age in which there had been 'no day without a deed to crown it,'—the age of joyous and youthful energy, not extinct even in the last years of the aged Queen. As it came to an end, Shakspere was himself still in the full vigour of his manhood; he was to live to accomplish many of his greatest works; but he had already come to recognise the greatest part of his task in life,—for from the Histories which he had brought to a perfection never before or since even attempted in that singular and purely English form of the drama he had turned to creations even wider in their scope, and calling upon us in full truth to reverence the prophet in the poet.

It has been well pointed out by Schlegel that any

[1] Cf. Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, i. 109. I shall not, I hope, be taken to task for neglecting to introduce certain obvious qualifications into a statement of which the general purport is I think beyond dispute.



attempt to divide the plays of Shakspere according to distinct species must necessarily halt. It is known how in *Hamlet* Shakspere himself ridicules the attempt to establish divisions and subdivisions of the drama under which every play can be classified; and how in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* he even laughs at the broad distinction which defines tragedy as that which ends unhappily:

> 'And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
> For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.'

Yet it is undoubtedly possible to uphold in some degree the divisions of comedies, tragedies, and histories under which his first editors arranged his plays, so long as the transitions, and so to speak the intersections, between the several species are acknowledged. The preceding observations have more especially dwelt from one point of view upon the last of these divisions; a few words may be added with particular reference to Shakspere's comedies, without any attempt being made to deny the existence in many of them of elements which they share with the other species. The notes already given on the ascertained sources of the comedies will serve as the basis of these remarks. The various facts and speculations as to the probable chronological sequence of the plays have been taken into account, without being regarded as capable of overthrowing distinctions not necessarily co-incident with definite periods of Shakspere's dramatic productivity.

Shakspere's comedies.

Thus, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, though the latter doubtless contains many additions from other sources, are so essentially adaptations or revisions of earlier plays, that it is futile to seek in them for any evidence of Shakspere's conception of comedy; he has merely used old materials and given them incidental novelty, without in any true sense of the term recasting them in the mould of his own genius.

Those not original omitted from consideration.

Love's Labour's Lost and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* bear the obvious marks of an early origin; and the latter

Love's Labour's Lost, and

The Two Gentlemen of Verona imperfect examples;

was possibly written with the aid of an earlier play, apart from the Italian comedy to which resemblances have been pointed out in it. The humorous characters of *Love's Labour's Lost* are in part reproductions of favourite types of Italian comedy; and the delicate texture of the whole, not obscured even by the crudities of form in which the play abounds, must have been wholly new to the existing English comic stage. Lyly had indeed set the example both of fanciful plots and of witty dialogue moving without the restraint of verse; but his frosty allegory and his pedantic rhetoric had alike no dramatic origin.

A Midsummer Night's Dream a perfect example of Shakspere's romantic comedy.

That species of Shaksperean comedy of which these two plays may be regarded as furnishing the first examples, and which found its most perfect developement in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is thoroughly peculiar to him when compared with the dramatists of whom I have spoken as his predecessors. Its origin may in part be traceable to a foreign growth; but in Shakspere's hands it attained to a developement which it had never reached on its native soil.

Origin of this species.

The whole history of Italian culture, under its social as well as its literary aspect, exhibits a remarkably intimate co-operation of two elements which, for want of more precise names, I may perhaps designate as the academical and the popular. In French literature *e.g.* the two elements ceased to co-operate to the same degree after the Renascence period, and to this day French dramatic literature in particular has failed thoroughly to re-unite them. In Italy the popular element was that which, as has been seen, produced the earliest efforts of the native drama, and which in the end gave rise to that dramatic form which survived the gradual decline of the dramatic growths derived from purely literary sources. Italian tragedy and comedy had their day; their revivals have been and probably will be frequent; the hybrid growth of the pastoral drama has passed; the Opera, which has called in the aid of another art, still flourishes; but the only dramatic form which has lived throughout the whole history of the people is one which is popular in its origin.

The *commedia dell' arte* in its later development

In the middle of the sixteenth century the Italian *commedia dell' arte*, while it had contrived to preserve the characteristics of its popular origin, was at the same time largely under the influence of the Academies which were the chief representatives of the still active Renascence movement. It was in this phase of its career, when its established figures had been elaborated with unflagging activity and when at the same time a courtly and even learned tone had been given to some of its productions by the Academies, that the English dramatists, and Shakspere among them, came in contact with its phenomena. The Italian actors who visited England at this time created astonishment by the rapidity of their improvisations, but what must have been specially instructive, was the variety of effect which they were able to create with a series of characters more or less fixed, so as to preclude all deeper characterisation[1]. With some of the regular comedies of the Italian stage it is very likely that Shakspere had in addition become acquainted, whether at second or at first hand is of little importance; and a considerable proportion of the literature of Italian prose-fiction was in one way or the other open to him. But in the wish which he must have entertained to satisfy the craving of his public for incident, and in his observation of the lightness and ease with which the *commedia dell' arte* treated character, may very probably be sought the outward impulses contributing to lead him to a species of comedy which was new to English, and indeed to any, dramatic literature.

a presumable influence.

Shakspere's romantic comedy essentially a comedy of incident.

These speculations may appear far-fetched; but whether or not they supply the key, or whether or not any key be called for, I offer them in connexion with the one criticism which I venture to make on the species of Shaksperean comedy under discussion[2]. This species is essentially a comedy of *incident*, though of course the element of character is not absent from it. There can be no pedantry

[1] Cf. Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, p. 253; and see Klein, iv. 217.

[2] See the remarks on this subject in an able work by C. Humbert, *Molière, Shakspeare und die deutsche Kritik* (1869).

in adopting a distinction which, whether applied to comedy or to prose-fiction, is legitimate, so long as it is not forced beyond reasonable limits. Incident, character, and manners give their names severally to those kinds of comedy in which the one or the other element predominates according to the conception of the author. Comedy of character most thoroughly fulfils the end to which all comedy seeks to attain, because it meets that end more directly than comedy of incident and moves in a both higher and wider sphere than comedy of manners. Hence we may recognise as the most perfect types of comedy those which with incomparable felicity exhibit the lasting types of ridiculous humanity, such as the litigious old gentleman in *The Wasps* and the unctuous hypocrite in *Tartuffe*. Now of comedies of character proper it is not easy to find examples among those of Shakspere's plays which are comedies pure and simple, unless it be *The Merry Wives* or *The Taming of the Shrew;* but in the former of these the main character was given (whatever may be the truth of the apocryphal anecdote that the play was written to order), while the latter has been already set aside as not original. Eminent critics have sought to tabulate Shakspere's comedies in general as comedies of character. In each they have been anxious to find a central character;—as Molière devoted one play to the Hypocrite, another to the Miser, a third to the Misanthrope, so it has been declared that Shakspere designed in his comedies to offer a gallery of various human types. These critics appear to have been deceived by the supposed analogy of the tragedies. It is impossible to read a tragedy of Shakspere (I do not include all the Histories under this term), or to see it represented on the stage, without feeling that its interest is centred in its hero. Popular instinct has given expression to this truism by converting into a proverbial saying the hackneyed jest about the performance of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet left out. *Romeo and Juliet* is the tragedy of loving devotion; in the two characters which give their name to the play its interest concentrates itself, no other character is essential to it. *Othello* is the tragedy of loving jealousy;



Richard III of ruthless natural ambition; *Macbeth* of that other kind of ambition which in the absence of self-control masters honour; and so forth. But in the comedies, on the other hand, there is not only no personage in whom the interest absolutely centres, but it would be difficult to name one in which there are not at least two parallel actions which competitively engage the attention of reader or spectator.

That Shakspere's comedies are not comedies of manners, will hardly require proof. An element of comedy of manners many of them of course contain—an element introduced with so masterly an ease and power that it is manifest how Shakspere might had he chosen have excelled in this inferior branch of the art. *The Merry Wives* alone might be argued as a whole to approach the species; the element is recognisable in *Twelfth Night* and in many others.

Nature of the incident.

Shakspere's comedies then are mainly, though far from wholly, comedies of incident; *i.e.* their main interest lies not in the characters which their action developes, or in the manners which it furnishes opportunity for depicting, but in the story of the action itself. But the incident of Shaksperean comedy is of a peculiar kind; and it is here that we arrive at a distinctive characteristic of our poet, the origin of which is due to the creative power of his genius. His comedies are *romantic* in the widest sense of the term; *i.e.* they treat of subjects far away from the ordinary course of human experience, they range into domains which the power of the dramatist alone can bring into living relation with the mind of the spectator, in which he alone can make the reader at home, as the poet is at home there himself. The conditions of the action are thus removed beyond the control of moral or even social laws of cause and consequence, though the art of the poet conciliates our sympathy for its agents[1].

[1] The following observations by Guizot (which I translate from Humbert, *u. s.*, p. 278) will more adequately indicate the point of view of my remarks:

'Shakspere's comedy is a fantastic and romantic work of the mind, a refuge for all those delightful improbabilities, which from indolence or whim fancy

The names of the comedies indicative of their character.

This difference between the dramatist's intention in his tragedies and comedies respectively—and on consideration a play so mixed in species as *The Merchant of Venice* will be found as an exception to prove the rule—is very clearly indicated by the titles which he gave to them. Nothing can be more futile than to endeavour to seek a deep meaning in the titles lightly bestowed, it cannot be doubted, upon these romantic comedies. Again and again Shakspere takes a story which he has found in some Italian novel or in its French or English version; combines it most usually with one or more other stories from similar sources; as he with marvellous though not infallible dramaturgic skill developes the action of his play, its characters frequently, though not always, become lifelike realities in his hands; the wondrous combination of reading, fancy, humour, and wit is rapidly accomplished; and then it is christened by a pleasant name—*All's Well that Ends Well, As You Like It, What You Will, The Winter's Tale.* He invented no sonorous phrases as names for his tragedies, after the fashion of some of his brother-dramatists, Thomas Heywood *e.g.*; he did not, like Ben

merely strings together by a thin thread, in order out of them to construct a variety of manifold complications, which exhilarate and interest us, without precisely meeting the test of the judgment of reason. Pleasing pictures, surprises, merry plots, curiosity stimulated, expectations deceived, mistakes of identity, witty problems leading to disguises,—such were the materials of these plays innocent and lightly thrown together.—It is not to be marvelled at, that Shakspere's youthful and brilliant power of imagination loved to dwell on such materials as these; because by means of them it could, free from the severe yoke of reason, at the expense of probability produce all manner of serious and strong effects.—Shakspere was able to pour everything into his comedies; and in fact he did pour everything into them, with the exception of what was irreconcileable with their system, *viz.* the logical connexion which subordinates every part of the piece to the intention of the whole; and in each detail attests the depth, greatness, and unity of the work. In the tragedies of Shakspere it will be difficult to find any single conception, any situation, any deed of passion, any degree of vice or of virtue, which will not be found to recur in one of his comedies; but what in the one reaches into the most abysmal depth, and proves itself productive of consequences of the most moving force, and severely takes its place in a series of causes and results, is in the other barely suggested, merely thrown out for the moment, so as to create a fugitive impression, and to lose itself with equal rapidity in a new complication.'

The very essence of romantic comedy seems to me to be here described.



Jonson, seek to distil the essence of his comedies into their titles; yet what more appropriate than his simplicity in the one case, and his felicitous audacity in the other?

A Midsummer Night's Dream as an example of Shakspere's romantic comedy.

A single example must suffice to illustrate the meaning of the above remarks. Is there any one of Shakspere's comedies in which he has more thoroughly compassed the end of all art, by which he has given greater and more constant delight in the closet or on the stage, than the *Midsummer Night's Dream*? Of its beauties of diction—in the dialogue as well as in the lyrical passages—I am not at present speaking; but what is the source of its dramatic effectiveness? Is this to be sought in its characters, or rather is it to be sought mainly in them? First we have Theseus and Hippolyta, whose marriage is the occasion so to speak of the action of the piece (to which some commentators have accordingly ascribed a festive design). In them there is nothing but the pleasant dignity of Duke and Duchess. Egeus again, the afflicted father of Hermia, is very slightly drawn; and between the two pairs of lovers, Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena, there are indeed distinctions and differences,—but these are only very lightly indicated; it is clear that the poet's intention was not to mark the effect of the lovers' adventures upon their characters, but merely to present suitable figures for carrying on the strange story. Next, we have the delectable group of tradesmen who furnish forth the anti-mask, in their study and performance of the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe. Surely it is only jesting criticism to find in these fancifully-sketched figures the embodiment of a deep design. The strange situation in which Bottom is placed gives him a superior importance, but together with the situation the humorous play of character, the opportunity for which Shakspere was certain not to neglect, is at an end; and in the height of the fun characterisation has become quite out of the question. There is enough realism about these oddities to produce the designed effective contrast with the fairy world; but to suppose that Shakspere in these humorous creations intended to create types of character, is to credit him with

a design which if communicated to him would have caused him to stay his fantastic pen in wonderment as it poured forth the Carneval nonsense of this inimitable company of dilettanti[1].

Lastly, take the fairy world itself, as it appears before us in Oberon and Titania, with Puck and the rest of the

[1] I may quote a criticism of Hazlitt's as an example of a kind of comment which, attractive as it is, really misleads:—

'It has been observed that Shakespear's characters are constructed upon deep physiological principles: and there is something in this play which looks very like it. Bottom the Weaver who takes the lead of

"This crew of patches, rude mechanicals
That work for bread upon the Athenian stalls"—

follows a sedentary trade, and he is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake anything and everything, as if it was as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle. He is for playing the tyrant, the lover, the lady, the lion. "He will roar that it shall do any man's heart good to hear him;" and this being objected to as improper, he still has a resource in his good opinion of himself, and will "roar you an't were any nightingale." Snug the Joiner is the moral man of the piece, who proceeds by measurement and discretion in all things. You see him with his rule and compass in his hand. "Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study." "You may do it extempore," says Quince, "for it is nothing but roaring." Starveling the Tailor keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. "I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done." Starveling, however, does not start the objections himself, but seconds them when made by others, as if he had not spirit to express his fears without encouragement. *It is too much to suppose all this intentional; but it very luckily falls out so.* Nature includes all that is implied in the most subtle analytical distinctions; and the same distinctions will be found in Shakespear. Bottom, who is not only chief actor, but stage-manager for the occasion, has a device to obviate the danger of frightening the ladies. "Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver; this will put them out of fear." Bottom seems to have understood the subject of dramatic illusion at least as well as any modern essayist. If our holiday mechanic rules the roast among his fellows, he is no less at home in his new character of an ass "with amiable cheeks, and fair long ears." He instinctively acquires a most learned taste, and grows fastidious in the choice of dried peas and bottled hay. He is quite familiar with his new attendants, and assigns them their part with all due gravity. "Monsieur Cobweb, good Monsieur, get your weapon in your hand, and kill me a redhipt humble-bee o the top of a thistle, and, good Monsieur, bring me your honeybag,"' &c.

I venture to add that Mr. Phelps, one of the last eminent actors of Shakspere left to adorn the English stage, appears to me in his otherwise admirable representation of Bottom the Weaver to err precisely in the direction of over-characterisation.

frolicsome company. An eminent critic[1] speaks of them as 'beings without the finer feelings and without morality. The effects of the confusion which they produce cause no mental impression in themselves. They are without a higher intellectuality: they never reflect: there is no trace in them either of contemplation, or of the expression of a sentiment. They are without the higher intellectual capacities of human nature. Their joy is to couch in flowers, while the wings of butterflies fan them to rest. Their thoughts are merely directed towards the physical. Their sympathies are with butterflies and nightingales; it is upon hedgehogs, toads, and bats that they make war; their chief delights are dance, music, and song. It is only the sense of the Beautiful which elevates them above mere animal life.' If we accept this analysis, if we acknowledge that the few incidents which occur among the fairy crew neither produce, nor are intended to produce, any moral effect whatever,—what then is the result? The whole *dramatis personae* of this play, the merely conventional figures of the Duke and Duchess and the pairs of lovers, the realistic oddities in the company of tradesmen, and the fanciful impossibilities of the fairy court, are merely a felicitous machinery for carrying on the action. The whole play is essentially a romantic comedy of incident; and it is the fancy which is mainly active in the enjoyment of it.

Later examples.

The same remark might be applied to a far later play, in which Shakspere seems to have returned in this respect to his earlier manner. In *The Winter's Tale* delineation of character as affected by the progress of the action is not the primary object of the play, the characterisation of which is accordingly upon the whole the reverse of deep. Yet Gervinus and with him other critics call upon us to recognise in it a comedy of character; in Leontes the jealous King we are asked to see a counterpart of Othello. Othello, we are told, is a noble and confiding mind; it is only the terrible fatality of his situation and the diabolical craft of his enemy which evoke the monster of jealousy in his mind. Leontes', on the other hand, is from the first

[1] Gervinus.

a suspicious nature, whose tendency it is to think itself always in the right and all the world in the wrong. Undoubtedly his treatment of his wife requires dramatic explanation; has the poet psychologically explained it? I think not; and the most careful actor cannot make this character in itself satisfactory[1]. The improbable nature of the story of the play, which adds to its charm as a mere story, necessitated irrational conduct on the part of Leontes; and irrational his conduct remains,—some divinity made him mad, and some divinity heals him. But to compare this kind of characterisation with that of Othello!

Comedies of a mixed species.

From the particular species of dramatic creation to which he thus incidentally recurred Shakspere had meanwhile long proceeded to other dramatic forms; but even in works which may in part be ascribed to his maturer years, though still to a comparatively youthful period of his life, may be recognised a combination of the conception and manner of his earlier comedy with other ends sought by other means. In *The Merchant of Venice* the story of the caskets is a mere romantic tale, conveying indeed a moral, but a very perfunctory one; the characters which play in it are, in part at least, mere shadows; there is no reality in Morocco or in Aragon. The story of the Jew is equally a romantic fancy in its original conception, though it embodies a moral lesson; but here Shakspere has used the incident for the character, and has developed the latter with the utmost force, so that Shylock becomes as truly a type as any of the heroes of the tragedies. So even in *Measure for Measure;* so in a different way in *Twelfth Night*, where the comic figures are types both of manners and character, and where the story (the same which had, speaking comparatively, been so slightly treated in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) enables the dramatist to draw in Viola a character of all but tragic pathos.

But upon the works which display the dramatic genius of Shakspere in its fulness it seems unnecessary to add any

[1] So at least it has seemed to me, on renewing my acquaintance with *The Winter's Tale* as an acted play, while retaining a very lively remembrance of Mr. Charles Kean's Leontes.



The element of character never absent.

further remarks in this place. It is hardly necessary to express a hope that even the little which has been said will be taken with a grain of salt. The dramatic power of Shakspere's genius manifests itself in all his plays—in his romantic comedies woven in their original conception out of fancies light as air, and in the tragedies of passion and force carved out of the solid marble of ancient historical tradition. He saw character in everything; and gave expression to this perception in all his dramatic works. In *As You Like It*, *e.g.*, he peoples the fanciful realm of a sylvan solitude with characters of the directest human truthfulness; there is reality in the melancholy of Jaques, and reality in the foolery of Touchstone. My point is, that in those comedies which, belonging to Shakspere's earlier years, approximate to the romantic type proper, characterisation is introduced incidentally rather than as belonging to the design of the play, and begins and leaves off as the fancy of the poet lists. The design being to carry the spectator far away from the real world of human life, there was no necessity for seeking to exemplify the moral laws by which that life is ruled. But so happily was knowledge of human nature united in Shakspere to the most vivid of imaginations, so truly was he (as was admirably said of him by Pope) not more a master of our strongest emotions than of our idlest sensations, that there was no creation of his, into whatever regions and to whatever distance it strayed or soared, whose connexion with living humanity was lost[1]. At last, in *The Tempest*,

[1] A familiar illustration of this might be traced in the Fools and Clowns of Shakspere, had this subject not been so fully treated by competent hands. Nothing could in its origin be more abstract than this class of character. The Fool of the Elisabethan drama was the last representative of that figure of mere negation, the Vice of the moralities. The Fool had not necessarily any more real connexion with the plot of a play than his namesake at Court or in a nobleman's house had with the State or family counsels which he had the privilege of subjecting to his perennial flow of criticism. Yet with how wonderful a skill does Shakspere find a place for this hybrid element, half in and half out of the action, in the widest variety of his plays! I do not speak of course of the Fool in *King Lear;* for there the character takes an integral part in the action, naturally representing the last remnant of the following of the ill-used King. But such a character as Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well*,

the comedy of romantic incident was blended, as it never has been before or since, with characterisation of the widest, the subtlest, and the profoundest kind.

Shakspere's services to the progress of the English drama.

The services which Shakspere rendered to the progress of the English drama are not of a nature to be summarised in a few sentences. In whatever direction the enquiry turns, his advance upon his predecessors is alike indisputable, though it is not under every aspect that it is alike enormous, or equally the result of his original genius.

His dramatic diction.

Thus, in view of the activity which the age expended upon dramatic literature and of the all-important steps taken before Shakspere's career as a dramatist may be held to have begun, the progress which the mere outward form of dramatic literature achieved in his times and with his co-operation is not to be attributed to him alone, or even to him mainly. As to *diction*, nearly all the other Elisabethan dramatists as well as Shakspere display the varied capabilities of the English tongue more fully than Spenser or any other non-dramatic writer, because of the peculiar conditions under which the dramatists composed their works. Nowhere but on a popular stage, patronised at the same time by Court and nobility, could a diction be formed which satisfied the demands of so widely different classes of hearers. In preserving the drama from the danger of becoming the amusement either of an exclusive class (which it was in the hands of a Sackville or a Lyly) or of the lower orders only, Shakspere and his contemporaries at the same time elevated and popularised the literary language of their age. They saved it from following an

who in other hands would have been the mere clown of the play, in Shakspere's becomes, in his relation to Bertram, the suggestive element of what is low and mean and base. (Cf. Klein, iv. 589.) Indeed, the conception of Falstaff, the most successful perhaps of all Shakspere's comic characters, is merely a further developement of the same original idea. He is the comic foil to the serious action of the play, but what a type of humanity is created in the process! Then we have the Fools proper in *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *&c.*, who at the same time (according to Coleridge's expression) supply to some extent the place of the ancient Chorus, and are in a greater or less degree themselves living types of human character.

archaising tendency, such as it pursued in the hands of Spenser. Where archaisms occur in Shakspere they are not, like those of Spenser, purposely introduced in order to clothe the diction in a particular colour certain to mystify the multitude; but they are, like the archaisms of the Authorised Version, clung to by the poet because they had been clung to by the people at large. The people had its old saws, its snatches of wit or wisdom in prose or verse, its proverbs and proverbial expressions, its favourite mottoes, devices, and emblems; and to all these the popular drama, and Shakspere in particular, made frequent reference, as certain to command immediate popular approval and applause. It is of course more especially in the comic scenes or passages of Shakspere that we must look for archaisms of this description. His Fools and Clowns, whose wit and fun appeal directly to the understanding of the groundlings,—besides at times concealing a wisdom of real depth or a true insight into character,—frequently indulge in such reminiscences[1]. With this deduction, then, and that of passages of particular kinds to be immediately noticed, in which for one reason or the other Shakspere affected the euphuistic manner of speech, his diction is a fair and full representative of Elisabethan English; neither vulgarised, on the one hand, to suit the ears of the lower classes, nor, on the other, either archaistically coloured like that of Spenser, or 'Italianated' like that of other prose-writers, or Latinised like that of Bacon[2].

It was of infinite importance, both for the progress of our dramatic literature and for that of the language at large, that this should have been the case; but the result was of course only achieved by Shakspere in conjunction with his brother dramatists. Had it not been for this influence on the part of the stage, the Elisabethan period of our language

[1] Thus, to take only one example, how many archaisms of form, how many obsolete words or forms of words, how many instances of lost flexion are to be found in the scraps which the Fool in *King Lear* throws at 'nuncle.'

[2] It is possible that provincialisms may be here and there discoverable in Shakspere's diction; but I have doubts as to the only form of the kind which has occurred to me.

would have exercised a far more one-sided influence upon its general course than was actually the case; and the native Germanic genius of our tongue would have been exposed to serious dangers from the effects of the Renascence movement. Reciprocally, had not the genius of Shakspere and, in a lesser degree, that of his fellow-dramatists contributed to elevate the popular stage, where it was natural and necessary to employ in the main popular diction, our dramatic literature could never have ranked as an equal by the side of other literary developements.

His use of prose.

The use on the English stage of prose as a vehicle of expression entitled to equal rights with verse was, as has been seen, due to Lyly, though not originally introduced by him. Shakspere, together with most of his contemporaries among our dramatists, was largely under the influence of Lyly's prose; but it may be worth observing the limits within which he admitted its operation. In Shakspere's prose, as has been pointed out by Delius[1], it is easy to distinguish three kinds. First, we have the speech of the clowns and their fellows, which in phraseology and construction is the speech of the people, and frequently presents such reminiscences as those adverted to above. Lyly, as has already been observed[2], failed to make this distinction; his serving-men are euphuists hardly less than their masters. Secondly, we have the essentially euphuistic style, which in Shakspere's earlier dramas[3] is at times undoubtedly introduced in order to ridicule it, while in his later plays it is employed 'without any such purpose and in full seriousness, where information is to be given to the spectators as to the nature of a situation, or where a specially solemn and ceremonious tone is intended[4].' Here Shakspere, it cannot be doubted, was consciously employing that elaborate species of phraseology peculiar to the good society of his age, of which Lyly was the acknowledged master. Lastly, we have

[1] See a most exhaustive essay, *Die Prosa in Shakespeare's Dramen*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. v (1870).

[2] *Ante*, p. 155.

[3] *e.g.* of course *Love's Labour's Lost*; also *All's Well that Ends Well* (especially iv. 3).

[4] *e.g. Winter's Tale*, v. 2.



the humorous prose spoken as a rule (though not exclusively) by personages of higher rank and superior importance—the prose of high comedy, as I may venture to call it. Suggested in form by the dialogues of Lyly, these Shaksperean conversations—of which the wit-combats in *Much Ado about Nothing* furnish the most signal example—are far from being essentially euphuistic; and in no branch of dramatic writing was the advance made by Shakspere more remarkable, while none of his Elisabethan contemporaries approached him in the combination of elegance, lightness, and point which he here displayed. With all his powers of observation and wit, Ben Jonson laboured in vain to attain to an equal success; Beaumont and Fletcher have been judged to have 'copied more faithfully than Shakspere the language of the Court and the Mall,' but were it so, they copied far inferior models[1],—as, again, the comic dramatists of the Restoration copied models inferior even to theirs. But it is not a comparison which is in question here. What I wish to indicate is that the prose form of English high comedy has its first model in Shakspere.

His versification.

His *versification*, and the results which in this respect he achieved for our dramatic literature, have been made the subject of far more extensive comment. Here it will suffice to say that the progress which he helped to effect was not, so far as we can judge, essentially determined by himself. Nor was it entirely a progress to superior excellence of form, while it signally tended in the direction of freedom. In the earlier plays—notably in *Love's Labour's Lost*—Shakspere's art as a versifier is still far from self-possessed; in the latest—such as the Roman plays—the laws of metre are in some points relaxed with lordly licence. But while Shakspere thus at first falls short of, and then passes beyond, the norm observed in the plays of his middle period, such as *Twelfth*

[1] Donne, *Essays on the Drama*, p. 60, where it is happily said that Mr. Hallam's suggestion that Beaumont and Fletcher represent the phase and manners of the more polished circles more truly than their great contemporary 'may be granted when the Don Johns, Don Felixes, and Rutilios of those dramatists shall be shown to have excelled in conversation Orlando in Ardennes, Benedick at Messina, and Cassio in Cyprus.'

Night and *As You Like It*, the general currents of change observable in his versification are those common to the whole Elisabethan drama. The tradition of accommodating versification to syntax—stopping the line with the sentence or the clause—he derived from the example of Marlowe; but Marlowe himself in his later dramas, like Shakspere in his, abandoned a rigid adherence to it. The use of rhyme was likewise being narrowed when Shakspere began to write; but the strong lyrical element in his poetic individuality caused him as it were to exhibit a lingering affection towards it, especially in plays with a decidedly lyrical element in their conception, such as *Romeo and Juliet*. On the other hand, in the adoption of the use of feminine endings he followed the current of popular taste, though he never gave way to it to the same extent as Fletcher; so that grave doubts have arisen as to the entirety of Shakspere's authorship of the play in which this tendency is most conspicuously followed (*Henry VIII*). That, notwithstanding all this, Shakspere's verse remains unrivalled, is due to the spontaneous flow of his poetic creativity. He could not, like Jonson, have written his verses first in prose; for with him, unless all appearances deceive, there was no interval between the conception of a thought and its production in its appropriate poetic form. This is illustrated by the exquisite appropriateness of the lyrics introduced by him into his dramas, which reproduce in their very *form* the tone of a situation; but it characterises his versification as a whole. He cannot be said to have discovered, but he exemplified, with a fulness unequalled if not unapproached, the pliancy of the chosen metre of the English drama,—the marble flowed under his hands.

The construction of his plays.

The *construction* of Shakspere's plays has not always been regarded by critics as their greatest strength; yet it is undoubtedly in this that he has exerted the most lasting influence upon the English drama, as well as upon the modern drama of the Germanic nations in general[1]. It must not be forgotten that the conditions under which he

[1] See G. Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas*, p. 157 *seqq*.



constructed his plays were still the same as those I have already adverted to in considering the characteristics common to the works of his immediate predecessors[1]. In the first place, the great and irresistible demand on the part of the public was for incident—a demand which of itself necessitated a method of construction different from that of the Greek drama. To no other reason is to be ascribed the circumstance that Shakspere so constantly combined two actions in the course of a single play; and it is instructive to observe the progress which he made in the method of combination. In his adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* (Prelude and Interlude apart) the two actions have no organic connexion. In *The Merchant of Venice* they are soon combined with admirable skill; but it is a misguided ingenuity which finds any psychological connexion between them. But how deftly are the complicated threads of the plot of *Twelfth Night* woven together; and how perfectly constructed is the action of *The Tempest*!

The same demand however led to another danger, which was perhaps heightened in the case of Shakspere's very greatest efforts by that intensity of characterisation in which, taking all in all, we have to recognise the greatest of his dramatic qualities. The action depends in its interest to such a degree upon the hero, and the interest in the hero is raised to such a height by the time that the *climax* of the drama is reached, that in order to satisfy the demand for incident between climax and catastrophe, it becomes necessary to introduce characters and scenes which often weaken the effect of the concluding parts of the drama. No instance is more illustrative of this than *Hamlet*, where I have often experienced the fall of interest in the concluding part of the piece; but the remark applies also to *King Lear*, to *Coriolanus*, and to other plays[2].

Many details of Shaksperean construction are purely owing to the external conditions of his stage, and need not

[1] *Ante*, p. 261.

[2] Cf. Freytag, p. 161; but the criticism is one of the truth of which I have frequently convinced myself. The example of *Henry V* might be added—but the conditions of a *history* are obviously peculiar.

be dwelt upon, in particular as it is these which a skilful theatrical management may legitimately modify. But if in construction his plays be compared with those of his predecessors—with Marlowe's for instance, or Peele's—the immense advance made by Shakspere will be apparent. The best-constructed of Marlowe's dramas is more episodical in arrangement than the earliest of Shakspere's *histories* to which we can with certainty ascribe a virtually independent origin. Indeed, *Richard III* is a model of dramatic construction in the sustained power of its successive parts, and in its symmetry as a whole.

'Aids to construction' employed by him:

In connexion with this subject, it seems worth while to point out how the use which Shakspere made of what may be called *aids to construction* constituted another striking advance upon the practice of his predecessors[1]. Several of these expedients were derived from the Classical drama, where they had been invented to meet a very different necessity, and accordingly filled a far more important place. Such were those of prologue and epilogue, in which may be included the introduction of prologising and epilogising ghosts, and that of the *Chorus*. An invention of the modern stage was the explanatory dumb-show. Shakspere, as is known, did not wholly eschew the use of these expedients, but where he employed them it was usually with a felicity unknown to any of his predecessors. The result was that their use as mere perfunctory expedients[2] was by his influence either rendered obsolete, or became a sign of weakness rather than strength in those who resorted to them.

Chorus.

Of a *Chorus* the chief instance in Shakspere (leaving *Pericles* aside as probably not designed by him) is that in *Henry V*; but apart from the fact that this play is a history, and therefore lends itself to the introduction of a narrative element, the dramatist was specially anxious to efface by this expedient the difference between the grandeur of the events represented and the scale of their representation.

[1] See on this subject F. Lüders, *Prolog und Epilog bei Shakespeare*, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. v (1870).

[2] Hamlet accordingly ridicules a prologue which merely asks the good-will of the spectators.



Never have greater force and splendour of language been employed with a more direct purpose or a more consummate effectiveness. The appearance of *Time* in *The Winter's Tale* is called for by the special necessity of helping the audience over a wide interval of both time and place. The introduction of *Rumour* in the *Second Part* of *Henry IV* might perhaps have been more easily dispensed with.

Prologues and Epilogues.

The *prologues* and *epilogues* proper generally vary according to the character of the plays which they introduce or conclude. So *Romeo and Juliet* is introduced by a sonnet, *Troilus and Cressida* by a Prologue 'arm'd[1].' The epilogue to *As You Like It* and the 'jig' concluding *Twelfth Night* likewise felicitously attach themselves to the plays which they conclude. In a few of Shakspere's other plays indeed the epilogues are mere expansions of the invitation 'Plaudite[2];' but in the great majority of his later works Shakspere has avoided this species of appeal to the good-will of the public (or, as it became in Ben Jonson's hands, to the judgment of the discerning few). The solitary instance of a prologue which amounts to an exposition of both situation and character is to be found in *Richard III*, where it admirably corresponds to the design of the play.

The dumb-show.

It is unnecessary to add that the use of the *dumb-show* was never resorted to by Shakspere (the exception in *Hamlet* is of course no exception proper); and that where he introduces the supernatural agency of ghosts, they appear as factors in the action itself, not as spirits who have returned to earth to speak a prologue.

Interludes and masks.

The insertion of *interludes* merely designed for the entertainment of the spectators, and unconnected with the action of the play, was rarely resorted to by Shakspere. In his early romantic comedies indeed—in *Love's Labour's*

[1] This may have been suggested by the 'armed' Prologue to Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601); though of course the significance is there a very different one. Jonson had taken the notion from the Epilogus to his adversary Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*.

[2] The Prologue to *Henry VIII* (which has been thought not to be by Shakspere) certainly partakes of the character of a manager's address to a public of which he feels uncertain.

Lost and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*—the introduction of such intermezzi well accorded with the light texture of the plays; but Shakspere held that the date was 'out of such prolixity' in the midst of actions of deeper interest. Among his later plays *Timon of Athens* (i. 2) contains a mask, but here as in *Henry VIII* (i. 4) it is interwoven as a natural incident with the action; the play within the play in *Hamlet* brings about the climax of the tragedy; the mask in *The Tempest* (iv. 1) alone must, as it seems to me, be regarded as a deference on the part of the poet to a Court fashion. But in general, it is noteworthy how Shakspere, instead of allowing the fertility of his imagination to run riot in a species of invention which must have been peculiarly seductive to him, abstained as a rule from thus unsettling the balance of the construction of his dramas[1].

Shakspere's power of characterisation his supreme excellence.

But it was neither in diction and versification nor in construction that the progress of the English drama owed most to Shakspere. A single word must express its greatest debt to him and his greatest gift as a dramatist. This word is *characterisation*. It was in the drawing of his characters—which range over almost every type of humanity furnishing a fit subject for the tragic or the comic art—that he surpassed all his predecessors, and has never been approached by any of his competitors in any branch of the drama illustrated by his genius. On this head I will say no more—for it is that on which the greatest of Shakspere's critics have, as befitted them, dwelt with the utmost amplitude and with the intensest sympathy. The characters of Shakspere are the ideals of this aspect of the dramatic art; and his power of characterisation was to him a gift like the gift of Hephaestus to Achilles—it made him not only the foremost among the Danai, but the one Invincible among them.

Hamlet.

Thus it is that in the very play to which popular instinct turns as his masterpiece this excellence seems as it were to overflow the materials at the command of the dramatist.

[1] Modern managers in return destroy this balance by introducing pageants of all kinds wherever the slightest excuse offers itself.

In *Hamlet* alone, the most marvellously true as it is the most marvellously profound instance of Shakspere's power of characterisation, the central character is conceived on a far broader basis than is furnished by the action of the play. I can only offer the results of a repeated study of this tragedy when I say that in reading it or seeing it on the stage it seems impossible not to forget the plot in the character. It is as if Hamlet were pausing, not before the deed which he is in reality hesitating to perform,—which is neither a great nor a difficult one,—but before action in general. It is this necessity which proves too heavy for Hamlet to bear; the acorn—to use Goethe's simile—bursts the vessel in which it has been planted; and Hamlet succumbs beneath that fardel which is imposed on all humanity.

Conclusion.

But I have resolved to abstain from any attempt to follow the most eminent of Shakspere's critics in their endeavours to interpret the great characters of the works of Shakspere's maturity. Of those among his poetic gifts which were not of their nature essentially dramatic, though in the drama they found the readiest and widest opportunity for constant co-operation with his dramatic gifts themselves, I forbear altogether from speaking, as beyond the scope of this book. The name of Shakspere is synonymous with rapidity, variety, and penetration of analysis, with an infinite receptivity and infinite reproductiveness of humour, with passion streaming as the mountain torrent and pathos deep as the waters of the sea, and with the honeyed sweetness with which the Muses have tipped the tongues of none but their chosen favourites. As, however, I have in mentioning *Hamlet* referred to the most wondrously powerful of all Shakspere's creations, I may connect with the above suggestion as to his conception of its central character one concluding word. It is as from a study of *Hamlet* we pass to think once more of its author, of the task of his life, and of its performance, that we seem to recognise what it is to be great. Shakspere too, like all of us, had the Hamlet in him; it was no accident which led him to choose this type as that into which he poured so many of his deepest and innermost

thoughts. He had the Hamlet in him, but he was victorious over the weaker part of his nature. Here is the greatest of our poets, yet one of whom we know nothing but what his works tell us. A tradition of more or less doubtfulness may eke out their information here and there,—but they need it not. Of which of our poets, of which of our great men can the same be said? The dearest to us of all our writers, the gentle Shakspere to us almost as truly as to any of his contemporaries, he has not left us anything by which to attach us to his name, except his works. His fellow-dramatists are perpetually introducing themselves to our notice: defending themselves, explaining themselves, apologising for themselves, —but where is there a trace of this in Shakspere? Or, to pass for a moment beyond the range of these pages, how are we to compare such a life with the lives of other poets whom the annals of our literature name as the foremost in subsequent epochs? A Milton heroically combats in his blind old age a world which is far blinder than he, a Dryden and a Pope soil themselves by conforming to the demands of their age upon the service of their genius, a Byron petulantly defies a society of which in his heart he craves the worship. Shakspere passes out of his England almost unheeded; a fair day's wage is all that he has asked and received, and a fair day's work is all that has been acknowledged. But he has done a work greater than this, growing steadily with it, treading the accustomed path, employing the common tools, satisfying the everyday demands. His age offered him the same materials—neither more nor less—which it offered to his fellows; he has not disdained to make use of them; and out of them he has constructed the works which he has left as an inheritance to all times. Is there not in this the serenity —the full and conscious serenity—of the highest kind of genius? Is there not in it the answer to Hamlet's question—

> 'I do not know
> Why yet I live to say "The thing's to do,"
> Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
> To do't'?

On no man has a higher task ever been imposed than on Shakspere; and no man has ever responded to the summons of inspiration more readily, more devotedly, more gloriously than he. In the records of our literature at least we shall meet with no other life so complete, no rival fame so assured, no neighbour monument so lasting as his, of whose life we shall never know aught, whose fame was left the sport of circumstance, whose monument is in his works alone.

CHAPTER V.

BEN JONSON.

The literary fame of Ben Jonson.

NONE of our great Elisabethan dramatists has suffered more from Shakspere's fame than BEN JONSON. There is indeed no evidence to prove, while there are clear indications to disprove, the assumption that during his life the soul of the greatest of Shakspere's contemporaries among the dramatists was vexed by the superior gifts or the superior success of his friend. Critical by nature, Jonson possessed a character as generous as his mind was robust; and there is a ludicrous incongruity with the nature of the man in the supposition that it was poisoned by a malignant envy and hatred of Shakspere and his fame. The difference between the pair was indeed very great, and reflects itself in nearly everything which is left to us from their hands. But it is no less absurd to look upon Jonson and Shakspere as the heads of opposite schools or tendencies in literature, than to suppose the one to have regarded the other with jealous rivalry in life. Such criticism, though it may assume the aspect of profundity, is really on the level of Endymion Porter's wit, if the epigram be indeed his which asserts that Shakspere was sent from Heaven, and Ben from College. Indeed, with certain exceptions, Ben Jonson has met with a very one-sided justice at the hands of posterity. Too many admirers of Shakspere have had no sympathy to spare for his greatest contemporary in our dramatic literature. And yet Jonson's was so emphatically a literary genius, he was so truly a scholar (as well as much else) by nature, that one would have expected to find him a special favourite of literary



and scholarly criticism. Instead of this, men who gave up their lives to the study of Shakspere had nothing to devote to Jonson but a perverse endeavour to find traces of his malice against Shakspere. At last Gifford—the author of the solitary edition of Ben Jonson which deserves the name—effectually disposed of these attacks. Being himself a critic of a rather savage order, his manner of defence was often not more measured than the assaults against which it was directed; but it may be safely asserted that he in substance proved his case. Schlegel and several English writers on the drama in the earlier part of the present century—among them Coleridge—contributed some materials for a critical estimate of Ben Jonson; but little has been added to their efforts by more recent writers, and upon the whole Ben Jonson is still to be regarded as an unduly neglected author[1].

Life of Ben Jonson (b. 1573).

Ben Jonson[2] was born in the year 1573[3]. His grandfather, as he told Drummond, 'came from Carlisle, and,

[1] Of the First Folio edition of Ben Jonson's *Works* the first volume was published in 1616, and the second in 1631. They were reprinted in 1640 and 1641 (the latter, according to Lowndes, an extremely incorrect edition); and the whole works were again reprinted in a single folio volume in 1692. In 1715 appeared a reprint of this edition in 6 vols. 8vo., which sufficed till Whalley's edition in 7 vols. appeared in 1756, with a Life. As to this edition see Gifford's remarks; Whalley's notes are often very useful.

Gifford's edition of the *Works of Ben Jonson* in 9 vols. (of which the first includes a biographical memoir, and the famous essay on the *Proofs of Ben Jonson's Malignity, from the Commentators on Shakspeare*) was published in 1816. Of this edition an acceptable cheap reprint, with a few corrections and additions (among these 'a fuller and truer version of the *Conversations at Hawthornden* than had been discovered in 1816'), has been recently published by Colonel Francis Cunningham (1870). There is also an edition, with Memoir, by Barry Cornwall (1838). Drummond's notes of the *Conversations*, invaluable for our knowledge of Ben Jonson, previously only made public through the abstract in Drummond's *Works* (1711), were first given to the world in full by Mr. David Laing in the *Shakesp. Soc. Publ.*, 1842.—Among critical observations on Ben Jonson may be mentioned those of Thomas Davies in vol. ii of his *Dramatic Miscellanies* (second edition, 1785); Schlegel (*Lectures*, vol. ii. part ii); some notes by Coleridge in his *Literary Remains*, vol. ii, and by Hazlitt in his *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*; and a clever criticism by Taine, *Hist. de la Litt. Angl.*, vol. ii. chap. iii.

[2] The familiar abbreviation of Jonson's Christian name was habitual to himself, it is used by so grave a writer as Lord Clarendon, and since it was inscribed on his tombstone, it has never been discarded by posterity.

[3] Not 1574; see Laing's note to *Conversations*, p. 39.

His parentage

he thought, from Anandale[1] to it; he served King Henry 8, and was a gentleman. His Father losed all his estate under Queen Marie, having been cast in prison and forfaitted; at last turn'd Minister: so he was a minister's son. He himself was posthumous born, a moneth after his father's decease.' He adds that he was 'brought up poorly.' His mother had married again two years after her first husband's death. His step-father, whose name is unknown[2], was a master-bricklayer living in London near Charing-Cross. After receiving his first education in a private school in that neighbourhood, Ben Jonson was sent to Westminster School (the seminary of so many of our poets[3]) at the expense of a friend who was schoolmaster there—the famous antiquary Camden, of whom he ever after retained a grateful remembrance[4].

and education.

From Westminster he is stated to have gone to St. John's College, Cambridge; but there is no evidence on the subject except Fuller's statement. According to the same authority, he remained at the University only a few weeks. However this may have been, his works exhibit no reminiscences of a College residence; and though he afterwards became Master of Arts in both the Universities, it was, as he told Drummond, 'by their favour, not his studies'[5]. The learning which he acquired—and it was unusual both in extent and soundness—may probably be ascribed to a natural taste fortified by the good schooling of Camden.

[1] If so, the name was originally *Johnstone*. 'I believe there never was a Johnson heard of in Annandale or its vicinity; but it was the nest of the Johnstones.' Note (by C. K. Sharpe), *ib.* p. 18.

[2] See Note to Collier's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. clxvi, disproving the assumption that his name was Thomas Fowler.

[3] Dryden, Cowper, Churchill.

[4] See *Epigram*, No. xiv; the Dedication of *Every Man in his Humour*; and passages in *The King's Entertainment at his Coronation* (where use is made of a metaphor in the *Britannia*) and (according to Gifford, who I suppose refers to the speech of Heroic Virtue) in the *Masque of Queens*.

[5] *Volpone* is dedicated to both the Universities, no preference of course being shown for one over the other. The author of the *Returne from Pernassus* (iv. 3) evidently regards Ben Jonson as non-gremial.



Jonson a tradesman

On his return to London, Jonson, in a happy hour for his future adversaries, was taken into his step-father's trade. Any facetious insinuations to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no reason to suppose him to have had to work with his hands, though there would have been small disgrace to him had such been the case. But the telling of bricks or of figures in reference to bricks must have been equally distasteful to one whose spirit was always high and who had been trained as if for a liberal profession. The profession to which he escaped was that of arms; for he made his way to the Low Countries, where English troops were still assisting Maurice of Nassau[1]. He afterwards related to Drummond that during the period of his military service he had 'in the face of both the campes, killed one enemie and taken *opima spolia* from him;' but nothing further is known about this exploit or the nature and precise date of his campaign or campaigns. It cannot be said that there are any signs in Jonson's works of a desire to boast about his deeds as a soldier; but he gained 'some small rudiments of the science' of war, and drew a sham soldier all the better for having been himself a real one. The Captain Bobadils, Captain Surlies, Captain Hazards, and Lieutenant Shifts were the pest of their age; and there is some dignity in the way in which Jonson addresses 'True Soldiers' as members of a

and a soldier.

> 'Great profession which I once did prove
> And did not shame it with my actions then
> No more than I dare now do with my pen[2].'

Trustworthy dates are wanting for Jonson's life before the end of the year 1597; but it seems clear that he remained only a short time abroad, and that soon after his return he married and began to support himself by

[1] This is the period of shifting warfare so graphically described by Mr. Motley in his *History of the United Netherlands*, iii. 164. It may be that the removal of Sir Francis Vere's three English regiments from the Netherlands to Brittany in 1592 caused Ben Jonson's speedy return, if it had not taken place sooner.

[2] *Epigram* cviii.

His wife and children.

He becomes connected with the stage (by 1597).

the stage[1]. His wife, as he told Drummond, was 'a shrew, yet honest;' and for five years—but it does not appear at what period—he lived apart from her. He had, however, several children by her, of whom the eldest son died in 1603, in his eighth year[2]. His profession seems from all accounts—of which we need only give credit to the first, which agrees with probability—to have proved very uphill work at the outset. It is said (by Wood) that he was an actor at the Curtain Theatre; according to still more doubtful authority he formed part of a strolling company and 'took mad Jeronymo's part[3].' In any case he seems by 1597 to have been a regular member of Henslowe's company; for his transactions with the manager begin in July of that year[4]. This worthy's speculations extended to a variety of theatres, till in the beginning of the sixteenth century he and his partner Alleyn removed to the Fortune Theatre in Golding Lane. His system was to advance 'redy money' in small sums to his authors, as an earnest binding them to complete the plays which they had in hand for him. It is however, to say the least, questionable whether to him is to be ascribed the honour of having brought out Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*. In

[1] If Maria Johnson, who was buried in November 1593, was 'the daughter of his youth' whom he laments in his beautiful *Epigram* (xxii), this would fix the date of his marriage as not later than 1592, as the child was six months old when she died.—The date of his beginning to produce plays is roughly fixed by the first line of the Prologue to *The Sad Shepherd* (probably written 1635), 'He that hath feasted you these forty years;' but he very probably began his connexion with the stage as an actor.

[2] See the touching lines *On my First Son* (*Epigram* xlv); and cf. the father's account of his dream at the time of the boy's death in the *Conversations*, p. 19.

[3] See Dekker's *Satiromastix*. As Gifford says, this is rendered unlikely by the fact that the character of Jeronymo was written for an actor of small size.

'My mind's a giant, though my bulk be small'

would have sounded odd from Ben Jonson. The story doubtless arose from the 'adycions' which Ben Jonson was employed to write to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Cf. *ante*, p. 170.

[4] See Henslowe's *Diary* (edited by Collier), p. 80. There is another in December 1597; see p. 106. Yet in his *Life of Shakespeare* (p. clxviii) Mr. Collier asserts that Henslowe 'had no pecuniary transactions with Ben Jonson prior to the month of August 1598.'

his *Diary* is mentioned as a new play on May 11, 1597, 'the comodey of Umers,' which Malone and Gifford thought identifiable with Jonson's comedy, especially as Henslowe's memoranda show it to have been repeated eleven times. But on the title-page of *Every Man in his Humour*, in his own edition of his works in 1616, Jonson stated the play to have been first acted in the year 1598 by the Lord Chamberlain's servants; and Rowe has a tradition to the effect that Jonson, at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered a play to the actors, with which they would have nothing to do, until Shakspere having cast his eye upon it read it through, and afterwards recommended Jonson and his writings to the public. This pleasing tradition rouses Gifford's ire, and the evidence on which it rests is certainly not very trustworthy; on the other hand, I am inclined to agree with Mr. Collier that there is no proof of the identity of the 'comodey of Umers' and Jonson's piece, though it might be assumed that he made such alterations in his comedy as to enable him to offer it to the Lord Chamberlain's men as a new play[1]. In any case it is certain that in 1598 the play was acted by the company to which Shakspere belonged, and that Shakspere himself took a part in it[2].

His imprisonment (1598).

In this year however Ben Jonson's career as a playwright, the success of which was at the best beginning, was violently interrupted by an 'unfortunate accident,' as the phrase used to run in duelling days. He quarrelled with an actor of Henslowe's company named Gabriel Spenser, and in a duel which ensued in Hogsden Fields, killed his unfortunate adversary[3]. He was in consequence

[1] The point is discussed in Collier's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. clxv *seqq.*, with all the arguments of which passage I cannot however bring myself to agree.—It can hardly be supposed that *The Case is Altered*, mentioned by Nash in 1599, was earlier in the date of its production than *Every Man in his Humour*.

[2] Cf. *ante*, pp. 346, 355 *note* 3.

[3] The date of this event, misplaced by Gifford, was ascertained by Mr. Collier. (See, in his *Memoirs of Alleyn*, p. 50, Henslowe's letter deploring the loss of 'Gabrell,' 'slayen in Hogesden fyllde by the hands of bergemen Jonson, bricklayer.' Mr. Collier's argument that Henslowe would not have called Jonson

His two conversions.

thrown into prison, having according to his own account narrowly escaped the gallows; for what in a noble patron of the drama would have been deference to usage, was flat crime in a player. A priest who visited him in prison (one may fairly suppose them to have been comates in durance) converted him to the Catholic faith; he took his religion 'by trust,' as he afterwards told Drummond. 'Thereafter he was 12 yeares a Papist.' The circumstances of his second conversion are unknown; but there is no insinuation as to this change, any more than the former, having been the result of any motives but those of conviction. In his later years at least he seems to have been a diligent student of theology as of so much else[1]; but, which is of more consequence, his whole character, in matters where the intellectual and moral parts of his nature came into contact, was far too conscientious to allow of any suspicion being cast upon his rectitude in these changes[2].

a bricklayer if he had known him as one of his actors (*Life of Shakespeare*, p. clxix) will not hold good; for he certainly did know him in 1597. On the other hand, Col. Cunningham's suggestion that we have in this contemptuous designation an indication of the origin of the quarrel, must go for what it is worth. G. Spenser may have thrown the 'bricklayer' in Jonson's teeth; but it is a little too ingenious to conjecture that 'bergemen' may have been an intentional mis-spelling for bargeman, or bargee! In Henslowe's *Diary* Jonson's Christian name is generally spelt 'bengemen,' and Henslowe's indignant pen probably scratched an *r* for an *n* without any special additional malice.)—Jonson afterwards related this sorry adventure to Drummond in a rather military style, stating that his adversary 'had hurt him in the arme,' and used a sword 'ten inches longer than his.'

[1] Among the MSS. lost in the fire which consumed his library, he deplores

> 'Humble gleanings in divinity
> After the fathers, and those wiser guides
> Whom faction had not drawn to study sides.'

See *An Execration upon Vulcan* (*Underwoods*, lxii).

[2] There is a characteristic enough passage in the *Conversations* with reference to Jonson's behaviour immediately after his re-conversion, but it would be offensive to modern ears, though it is difficult to say whether it was meant for irreverence. Of course when Jonson expresses a wish to be a 'churchman,' in order that he might just once be able to speak his mind to the King, he means a clergyman.—The only passage indicative of his religious sympathies during the period when he was a Catholic is, so far as I know, in *Cynthia's Revels* (i. 1), where he justly ridicules the City magistrates for showing their 'religion, in



His release (by 1599).

He must have been released in a few months, for his *Every Man out of his Humour*, which breathes a spirit very unlike that of a prisoner, was acted in 1599[1], under which year too his name frequently occurs in Henslowe's *Diary*. Why he was released is not known; he told Drummond that 'his judges could get nothing of him to all their demands but I and no. They placed,' he added in his vigorous way, 'two damn'd villains to catch advantage of him, with him, but he was advertised by his keeper; of the Spies he hath ane epigrame[2].'

Jonson and Queen Elisabeth.

We have no record from his own lips in reference to the period of his life coinciding with the remainder of Queen Elisabeth's reign. The Queen witnessed his *Every Man out of his Humour*, and to honour the occasion he composed the 'Epilogue at the Presentation before Queen Elisabeth[3].' Whether Lord Falkland's assertion[4] that the Queen

> 'With her judicious favours did infuse
> Courage and strength into his' [Jonson's] 'younger Muse'

was based on any substantial proofs of the royal goodwill may be doubted. At her death Jonson was called upon by a contemporary poet[5] to write in honour of the Queen; but this again may mean little or nothing. From some members of the nobility he may have already in Elisabeth's reign received patronage; with the Spencer family at Althorpe at least, which is so graciously asso-

pulling down a superstitious cross, and advancing a Venus, or Priapus, in place of it.' Mere sarcasms against the Puritans are of course numerous; but on these it would be a mistake to put so special an interpretation, even where (as in *The Alchemist*, written possibly before his re-conversion, iii. 1) their horror of Rome is ridiculed.

[1] No importance need perhaps be attached to the circumstance that in the Dedication of this comedy to the Inns of Court, first published in 1616, he says that when he wrote this play he 'had friendship with divers' in the societies addressed.

[2] No. lix.

[3] In a line in this Epilogue Whalley thought he recognised an allusion to the *Faerie Queene*; but Gifford attacks him most savagely for his 'deplorable' blunder.

[4] Quoted by Gifford.

[5] Cf. *ante*, p. 280 *note*.

ciated with our poetic literature, he must have been acquainted before he composed the entertainment to welcome Queen Anne and Prince Henry there in 1603[1]; but other noble patronage which is known to have been bestowed upon him seems to belong to the reigns of James I and Charles I.

His means and habits of life.

But it was not in his character to be a mere hanger-on of the great[2]; and the patronage he afterwards received was the reward of literary work. Undoubtedly his main resource must still have been the proceeds of his profession as a playwright[3], though these were but slender, if he was accurate in telling Drummond that 'of his Plays he never gained £200.' He must have often been in sore straits[4] to obtain the necessaries of life, and the means for those indulgences which must at an early period have become necessaries to him. But it was not only wine 'raw' or 'burnt' or 'roguish' tobacco which he found at the Mermaid; but the company of wits and poets,—a company of which in the end he was to be freely acknowledged as the chief and centre.

His quarrel withDekker andMarston (1600–3).

But Bohemia has always been a country much disturbed by civil wars; and with Jonson's next known play we find him at least on the brink of the sea of troubles which disturbed so much of his literary life. In *Cynthia's Revels*, acted by the children of the Queen's Chapel in 1600—the play will be briefly described in its place below—he was thought by two playwrights with whom he had previously worked to have satirised them;

[1] For in the concluding note to this entertainment (the mask of *The Satyr*) Jonson speaks of Lord Spencer as 'his noble friend' to whom 'his affection owes servicable right.' Ben Jonson's name, so conspicuous in Nichols' *Progresses, &c. of King James I*, does not occur in the same author's *Progresses, &c. of Queen Elizabeth*. It may by the bye be added, that the anecdotes which Jonson told Drummond about Queen Elisabeth are the reverse of respectful.

[2] 'He never esteemed a man for the name of a Lord.' *Conversations.*

[3] Gifford notes from Henslowe three sums—twice of 40*s.* and once of 20*s.*—received by Jonson in 1599 for plays in course of writing by him in conjunction with Dekker, with Dekker and Chettle, and alone.

[4] 'Sundry tymes he hath devoured his bookes, *i. e. sold them all for necessity.*' *Conversations.*

and their avowed intention to retort through the readiest pen among them (Dekker's) led him to compose in heat if not in haste (he says that he completed it in fifteen weeks) his *Poetaster* (1601), which was a sufficiently direct attack upon two at least of his adversaries. Hereupon Dekker produced his *Satiromastix, or The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet* (1602); and the quarrel had now become too hot to last. As appears from the concluding lines of the *Apologetic Dialogue* added by Jonson to *The Poetaster*—it was so apologetic that he was according to his own account[1] 'restrained from repeating it by authority'—he accordingly resolved to turn from comedy to the serener sphere of tragedy, and in 1603 his *Sejanus* was produced at the Globe, Shakspere taking a part in the performance. But his enemies proved too strong to allow of a favourable reception being given to this tragedy on its first representation; and it was for a short time withdrawn from the stage.

Accession of James I (1603).

The accession of James I in the same year opened to Jonson opportunities for the exercise of his inventive powers in a new direction. Queen Elisabeth died on the 24th of March; and on the same day King James was proclaimed at the Court gates. On the 31st of March he was proclaimed in Edinburgh, and on the 5th of April he set forth on his journey 'accompanied with multitudes of his nobility.' His 'traine encreased' as he passed slowly southwards; feasts were spread wherever he halted, notably in 'Maister Oliver Cromwell's House' at Hinchinbrook Priory, into which the newly-released Earl of Southampton bore the sword before his Majesty, and where also attended the 'Heads of the Universitie of Cambridge,' with 'scarlet gownes and corner-cappes' and 'a most learned and eloquent Oration in Latine.' On the 7th of May the King entered London; and on the 11th rested at the Tower. His progress had been one of extreme brilliancy; knighthoods had been showered upon numberless aspirants; and the poets whose 'sorrowe' had speedily changed into 'joy'

The royal progress.

[1] In the 4to. edition of 1602. See Gifford's *Memoirs*, p. lxi, note 3.

had greeted him with panegyrics congratulatory at Burley, at Theobalds, and doubtless elsewhere [1].

Jonson engaged on masks and entertainments (1603 *seqq.*).

During the greater part of June, the King seems to have held his court at Greenwich; but he paid frequent visits to some of the principal houses in Middlesex and Surrey. His Queen and eldest son and daughter were meanwhile following from Scotland; and on their way the two former were entertained by Sir Robert Spencer of Althorp (near Northampton), who was soon afterwards raised to the peerage, partly no doubt in acknowledgment of the magnificence with which he had manifested his loyalty on this occasion. The mask of *The Satyr* produced on this occasion was from Ben Jonson's pen — the first of a long series of similar productions [2]. It is indeed remarkable how promptly his genius accommodated itself to the sudden demands of the taste — not of course absolutely novel, but novel in its intensity — introduced by the new reign. Already on the 15th of March, 1604, we meet with him again doing 'his part' for the King's royal passage through the city [3]; a few days afterwards he salutes the sovereign's 'happie entrance to his first high session of Parliament [4] (which by the bye very speedily entered into a discussion of the grievances arising from purveyors — an unwelcome comment on the details of royal progresses [5]); on May-day of the same year Sir William Cornwallis privately entertains the King and Queen at Highgate with Ben Jonson's gay little mask of *The Penates* [6]; and on Twelfth-night, 1605, the poet's *Masque of Blackness* has the crowning honour of 'being personated by the most magnificent of Queens, Anne, of Great Britain, with her honourable Ladyes' at Whitehall [7]. When in January, 1606, he is employed with Inigo Jones upon a Court entertainment held at a marriage celebrated there [8], the

[1] See Nichols' *Progresses, &c. of King James I.* *Sorrowes Joy* is the not infelicitous title of a collection of verses mingling 'a Lamentation' for Queen Elisabeth with 'a Triumph for the prosperous succession of' King James (1603). The panegyric at Burley was by Daniel.

[2] Nichols, *ib.* vol. i. p. 175. [3] *Ib.* p. 377. [4] *Ib.* p. 420.

[5] *Ib. Preface*, p. xi. [6] *Ib.* p. 431. [7] *Ib.* p. 479.

[8] *Ib.* p. 590.



regular course of the reign has long begun, and he is fairly established in his position.

Under the sunshine of royal notice, which undoubtedly grew into royal favour, and of the patronage of noble houses which followed as a matter of course, life must have assumed a brighter aspect for Ben Jonson. His literary quarrel too seems to have subsided—to be renewed in due season—about the time of James's accession; for in 1604 Marston dedicated his *Malcontent* to his recent antagonist in most respectful and affectionate terms; and the Epilogue of the same play contained a manifest reference to Jonson's deserts[1]. In 1605, however, at the very time when his masks had already brought him under the royal notice, a literary indiscretion involved him, together with Marston and Chapman, in trouble which might have proved very serious.

His voluntary imprisonment (1604).

In this year Chapman had returned to the stage with a comedy called *Eastward Hoe*, produced by him in conjunction with Marston, to which Jonson also appears to have contributed. This play (briefly noticed below among Chapman's dramatic works) contained one or more passages which, as reflecting on the Scotch, gave offence to Sir James Murray, a Scotch gentleman high in the King's favour[2].

[1] See Gifford's *Memoirs*. The peace was not lasting; but the subsequent attack of Marston upon Jonson need not be here discussed. His own account of his relations with Marston to Drummond was as follows: 'He had many quarrells with Marston, beat him, and took his pistol from him, wrote his Poetaster on him; the beginning of them were, that Marston represented him in the stage, in his youth given to' immorality. That he cherished a hatred for Marston in his later days appears from another passage in the *Conversations*.

[2] The passages which were omitted from some of the copies printed in 1605 are quoted by Collier, i. 357. It is probable that the passage, iii. 1 (where Seagull describes Virginia as peopled by 'only a few industrious Scots, perhaps, who indeed are dispersed over the face of the whole earth,' and goes on to speak as great friends to England 'when they are out on 't,' and to wish them out of it accordingly), was the stone of offence. Yet though, as Mr. Collier says, there are many passages ridiculing James I's 'thirty pound knights' (referred to in iv. 1; and cf. i. 1) in other plays besides *Eastward Hoe*, the allusion may have made Sir James Murray wince for a particular reason.

Sir James Murray, *Scotus* (as he is, with a curious coincidence of emphasis, called), was knighted by King James August 5th, 1603 (*Nichols, u. s.*, i. 246). On September 25th, 1605, is noted a royal gift to him at the christening of his

The circumstance being reported to the King caused the arrest of Chapman and Marston; and Jonson, although he appears to have had nothing to do with the offensive passage (a consolatory fact for any one who likes to claim him as a Scotchman), 'voluntarily,' as he afterwards related, 'imprissoned himself with' them. 'The report was,' he continues in his account to Drummond, possibly not understating the amount of the danger which he had incurred, 'that they should then have had their ears cut and noses. After their delivery, he banqueted all his friends; there was Camden, Selden, and others; at the midst of the feast his old Mother dranke to him, and shew him a paper which she had (if the sentence had taken execution) to have mixed in the prisson among his drinke, which was full of lustie strong poison, and that she was no churle, she told, she minded first to have drunk of it herself.'

Jonson's career as a dramatist (1604–1616).

Whatever had been their danger (Chapman is said to have been in favour with the Prince of Wales, and Jonson too by this time had friends at Court), the prisoners were soon released; and Jonson, as has been already seen, returned to his former mode of life. It is unnecessary to pursue the details of the services which, as the author of masks and similar entertainments, he rendered to the Court and to many of the nobility. He appears occasionally to have accompanied the former on its progresses; and in the houses of many of the great he must have been a welcome guest. It is not quite clear whether the title of Laureate was conferred on him in any more regular way than that in which it had been hitherto worn by many who wrote for the Court; but it is certain that in 1616 a pension of 100 marks was conferred upon him. His plays for the stage, as already noted, brought him no large income; though some of them appear also to have been acted at Court. No man could have been further removed than he was from any readiness to court the public taste, which he at times

child of 'one cupp and cover of silver guilt' (*ib.* p. 601). In the year 1605-6 he received a 'free gift' from the King of £100 (*ib.* vol. ii. p. 44). Perhaps these gifts were intended to console him for the injury he had suffered.

aspired to force into a judicious commendation of his efforts, at other times showed himself to despise altogether. Thus, though his *Volpone* (1605), which he afterwards dedicated to both the Universities, was received with great applause, his second tragedy, *Catiline* (1611), achieved only a doubtful success. But of these and his other plays I shall speak below; it will suffice here to note the dates of two others which exhibit his powers as a dramatist at their height—*The Alchemist* was produced in 1610, and *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614. His popularity as a dramatist continued to be an uncertain one, as is proved by the fact that, according to his own account in 1619, only half of his comedies were in print. Of the collected edition of his works which he undertook in 1616, he only published one (folio) volume. Indeed, if his own words are to be trusted, he came in his later years to look on the stage with disgust[1]; and from 1616 to 1625 he produced nothing for it. Doubtless in this period his chief means of living were his pension and the fees earned by him from the nobility; but it is pleasing to find proofs of the recognition of his genius and character in many traces of an intercourse not resembling one between buyer and seller. Thus of one patron, whose name connects itself with a still greater memory than Ben Jonson's, the Earl of Pembroke, Ben Jonson himself told Drummond that he sent him £20 'every first day of the new year to buy new books.' With another patron, Esmé Stuart, Lord d'Aubigny[2], Jonson at one time abode five years.

Cessation of his dramatic labours (1616–1625).

His patrons.

Pembroke's bounty at all events fell on no barren soil. It was, we cannot doubt, conscientiously expended, and not

[1] See the vigorous lines in his *Ode to Himself:*

'And since our dainty age
Cannot endure reproof,
Make not thyself a page
To that strumpet the stage,
But sing high and aloof,
Safe from the wolf's black jaw, and the dull ass's hoof.'

[2] He was the younger son of James's old favourite the Duke of Lennox, whom he succeeded in 1623. See *Epigram* cxxvii, and the Dedication of *Sejanus*.

His library.

carried to the Mermaid; for Ben Jonson was a genuine scholar, and his library, afterwards destroyed by a fire which inflicted an irreparable loss upon our literature, was his pride. His love of reading must have been insatiable; of his book-learning many proofs will be supplied in the course of my remarks upon his plays, in one of which he bears testimony to it with pardonable self-sufficiency[1]. But to the canary-sack must be ascribed part of the boastfulness which made him tell Drummond that 'he was better versed, and knew more in Greek and Latin, than all the Poets in England, and'—here Drummond appears to have imperfectly understood the author of the *English Grammar*—'quintessence their brains.' To this subject, however, I shall have occasion to return.

His taverns.

Thus in occupations and doubtless also in distractions manifold his life flowed on, for Jonson was not one of those ignorant of the art of desipience *in loco;* and the *loci* were many in Dowgate and off Cheape[2], and near and in Fish-street Old and New, which opened their doors to his portly form. Like his great namesake, with whom, try as one may, it is impossible to avoid comparing him, he must have felt London to be his 'element[3].' Twice, however, he seems to have quitted it on a longer absence.

His journey to France (1613 or '2).

For in 1613 or the previous year, possibly on account of the cessation of all Court festivities by reason of the death of Henry Prince of Wales, the Marcellus of the Stuart family, Jonson went to France, in the capacity of governor to one of the sons of Sir Walter Ralegh (at that time a State-prisoner in the Tower[4]). We know that Jonson was

[1] *Staple of News* (i. 2), where Gossip Tattle says of one of the author's plays: 'He is an errant learned man that made it, and can write, they say, and I am foully deceived but he can read too.'—The poem on the burning of his library has been already cited.

[2] Jonson's Mermaid was in Bread-street, Cheapside. See Dyce's note in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, iii. 129.

[3] 'The town is my element; there are my friends, there are my books... there are my amusements.' Johnson to Dr. Brocklesbury (1784).

[4] Apparently the eldest son, Walter, as the second, Carew, was then only nine years of age; and could hardly have perpetrated the trick described in the *Conversations*. Cf. Ralegh's *Works* (Oxford University Press ed., 1829), vol. i. p. 417.



in Paris in 1613, where he made the acquaintance of Cardinal de Perron, who showed him his translations of Vergil, and was told by the frank poet 'that they were naught.' The only other record of this peregrination is not creditable either to governor or to pupil; but the fact of the journey itself is interesting as establishing the certainty of a personal connexion between Jonson and Ralegh, of whom however he seems to have formed a rather severe judgment [1].

His Scotch journey (1618–9).

His other journey has become more famous, though Gifford speaks of the time in which Jonson made it as 'the most unfortunate period of his life,' in view of the melancholy results which a visit paid on this occasion seemed to have had for his good name. It is more to the purpose to observe that had it not been for Jonson's journey to Scotland we should be without the liveliest picture we possess of him.

It would appear that Ben Jonson took some time in maturing the resolution which he formed in 1618 of paying a visit to the home of his ancestors, which had of course acquired a new interest for him as the home of his royal patron. He conceived the idea of performing the journey on foot, although Bacon (who had recently been made Lord Chancellor with the title of Baron Verulam) bantered him with the remark that 'he loved not to see poesy go on other feet than poetical dactylus and spondæus.' Before he could execute his intention, it was announced by John Taylor the Water-poet that he would undertake the same journey, and accomplish it without a penny in his pocket. Jonson started somewhat about Midsummer 1618, and Taylor followed on the 14th of July.

Not much is known of Jonson's doings in Scotland, where he remained till the end of January 1619,—it is not even certain that he visited Anandale, though it is an

[1] 'Sir W. Raughley,' he told Drummond, 'esteemed more of fame than conscience. The best wits of England were employed for making his Historie. Ben himself had written a piece to him of the Punick warre, which he altered and set in his booke.'

His visit to Drummond.

allowable conjecture that he did so[1]. What is known for certain is that he spent two or three weeks with the Scotch poet William Drummond at his seat of Hawthornden, about seven miles from Edinburgh; and of this visit Drummond has preserved a record in his Notes of Ben Jonson's *Conversations*.

Drummond of Hawthornden.

Drummond (born in 1585) was a gentleman of good education who had been on the continent in his younger days, and by his travels and studies abroad as well as by visits to London had strengthened his natural taste for literature. His library was well stocked with the works of the English poets of his days, and he had attached himself to the new school of Scotch writers who cultivated composition in English instead of the native dialect. Of these writers the best known was William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, whose name will be noted as that of one of the dramatists of his age. Drummond himself had already published an elegy on the death of Prince Henry under the title of *Tears on the Death of Mœliades*, as well as a collection of *Poems* on various subjects, possessing great merit, and a panegyrical poem on the occasion of King James's visit to Scotland in 1617, under the title of *Forth Feasting*. These poems had found their way to London, and courtesies had been interchanged between their author and Drayton, who was at that time in the middle of his *Polyolbion*[2].

Thus Jonson's Scotch host was one in the literary atmosphere of whose house he could not but feel welcome; and he seems to have made himself thoroughly at home. Drummond kept memoranda of Ben Jonson's talk during the visit, and two or three friendly letters were exchanged between them after Jonson's departure for the south[3].

Ben Jonson, as has by this time become sufficiently manifest, was not one of those who, in the expressive

[1] See Masson's *Life of Drummond of Hawthornden* (1873), where a very spirited sketch is given of Jonson's visit to Drummond, with extracts from the *Conversations*.—Jonson mentions his journey in the mask of *News from the Moon* (produced after his return, early in 1621).

[2] See Masson, *u. s.*

[3] See Masson, *u. s.*, pp. 108–110.

German phrase, wear a leaf before the mouth. His moral like his physical nature was cast in a generously ample mould; he spoke his mind freely in praise and blame; uttered his opinion of men and books in round terms; and probably never gave a second thought to his sayings after they had flowed as copiously as the canary which had removed the last barrier of self-restraint. Talk such as this will not always bear analysis; and when Drummond, after Ben Jonson's departure, summarised his impressions of his guest in a note of his own,—not of course intended for the public eye,—it does not follow that he was in a fit mood for the purpose[1]. It would be easy by a slight modification of expression to convert many of Drummond's reflexions upon Jonson into tributes of praise; and even as the criticism stands, it is upon the whole one which tallies with a character in which there are generous features as well as unpleasant, and in which the worst faults are faults of temper. Nor should it be forgotten that Drummond was not a 'countryman' of Jonson's, and that Jonson's criticism of Drummond's poems had been of too candid a description to be speedily forgotten[2].

Jonson's Conversations with Drummond.

In any case, the *Conversations* now remain for any one to read; and they reveal enough of Jonson's character to

[1] The following is the well-known postscript to the *Conversations*, dated January 19th, 1619: 'He is a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to losse a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him (especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth); a dissembler of ill parts which raigne in him, a bragger of some good that he wanteth; thinketh nothing well bot what either he himself or some of his friends and countrymen hath said or done; he is passionately kynde and angry; careless either to gaine or keep; vindicative, but, if he be well answered, at himself.

'For any religion, as being versed in both. Interpreteth best sayings and deeds often to the worst. Oppressed with fantasie, which hath ever mastered his reason, a generall disease in many Poets. His inventions are smooth and easie; but above all he excelleth in a Translation.' (Besides the above there is an ill-natured joke about Ben Jonson's plays, which Drummond probably had from Jonson himself.)

[2] 'His censure of my verses was: That they were all good, especiallie my Epitaphe of the Prince, save that they smelled too much of the Schooles, and were not after the fancie of the tyme; for a child (sayes he) may writte after the fashion of the Greeks and Latine verses in running; yett that he wished, to please the King, that piece of Forth Feasting had been his owne.'

make it unnecessary to read them by the light of Drummond's concluding comments.

His life and labours after his return (1619–25).

Whatever literary works connected with his Scottish journey Ben Jonson had contemplated remained unexecuted, or at least unpublished; among the former was a *Lochlomond Pastoral*, among the latter an account of the journey itself, 'sung with all the adventures,' which perished with so many other works or drafts of works in the burning of his library[1]. After his return to England, he appears to have resumed his former course of life. In 1619 his visits to the country seats of the nobility were varied by a sojourn at Oxford with Corbet, then Senior Student at Christ Church and afterwards Bishop of Norwich—a poet who contrived to combine humorous characteristics of his own with the general features of the Fantastic School to which he belonged. It has been already stated that Jonson wrote nothing for the stage till 1625; but he composed numerous masks, in co-operation with Inigo Jones, with whom he had formerly quarrelled. He continued in high favour with the King, who in 1621 granted him the reversion of the office of Master of the Revels[2], and is even said to have wished to confer on him that honour which the royal fountain so liberally dispensed —the honour of knighthood.

He recurs to the stage (1625; 1629).

Yet the close of King James's reign found Jonson in no prosperous condition. His life can never have been a prudent one; to the Mermaid had succeeded the Devil Tavern; and in 1625 he was obliged to recur to the stage, when he in this year brought out his *Staple of News*. Disease however came upon him to increase his troubles; and we find no traces of masks or other entertainments in which he was engaged, after the mask of *The Fortunate Isles* produced in 1727. He was again on ill terms with Inigo Jones, who seems to have prevented the employment of his adversary. In 1629 he once more essayed the stage, but *The New Inn* proved a failure.

Its epilogue, which lacks neither pathos nor dignity,

[1] See *An Execration upon Vulcan*, already quoted.

[2] Sir J. Astley, who held the office, however survived him.

contained a brief allusion to the neglect which he was experiencing from the new sovereigns[1]; but King Charles hereupon immediately sent him a gift of a hundred pounds, and on another more cheerful appeal from the gratified poet[2] increased his standing salary to the same sum, adding an annual butt of canary[3]. These favours were however the last royal patronage which appears to have been bestowed upon him; the City too withdrew its annual payments[4]; and he began to address from a sick-bed appeals for assistance to noble patrons, which did not remain without response. The kindness of the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Newcastle must have cheered the days of his decline; and the relations between Jonson and this nobleman, himself a dramatic poet, seem to have been on a footing of pleasant literary intercourse[5]. He wrote one or two more plays which bear unmistakeable marks of the decay of his powers, and one or two little entertainments. When the end came, on August 6th, 1635, there was found among his papers part of a pastoral drama, *The Sad Shepherd*, the great beauty of which proves that he had not lost his poetic powers when at last the pen dropped from his palsied hand. He left other works behind him, in addition to the second volume of the Folio edition which he had published in 1631.

His last years.

His death (Aug. 6, 1635).

In his old age, and when the decline of his powers was hastened by disease and difficulties, Ben Jonson was still regarded as the veteran chief of English literature. The *Mermaid* days had passed of which Beaumont had sung,

Jonson in his old age as the chief of the world of letters.

[1] 'And had he lived the care of king and queen,
His art in something more yet had been seen.'

[2] See 'The Humble Petition of Poor Ben
To the "best of monarchs, masters, men,
King Charles."'—*Underwoods*, xcv.

[3] I presume this gift to have originated the custom of the laureate's annual butt of sherry.

[4] 'Yesterday the barbarous Court of Aldermen have withdrawn their chandlerly pension for verjuice and mustard, £33 6*s.* 8*d.*' (Letter to the Earl of Newcastle, quoted in Masson's *Life of Milton*, i. 391.)

[5] This may be gathered from the Duke's assertion (quoted by Gifford, p. xvi, from the Duchess' *Letters*) that 'he never heard any read well but Ben Jonson.' See also *Introductory Essay to the Cavalier and his Lady* (*Selections from the Works of the First Duke and Duchess of Newcastle*, by Mr. Edward Jenkins, 1872).

when Jonson had been surrounded by those whom he might regard as his peers. The 'Apollo' room of his favourite Devil Tavern was now the charmed circle over which he presided, and which he ruled as a constitutional monarch according to the charter which he had himself drawn up[1]. But his friends and admirers were not confined to those who were 'sealed of the tribe of Ben[2].' Contemporary literature of every description—from Clarendon to Milton, and from Milton to Herrick—abounds with testimonies together proving his position to have been unrivalled among the men of letters of his times; and on his death a crowd of poets hastened to pay their tributes of acknowledgment to one who seems to have been loved more than he was feared, and to have left behind him a gap which it was felt must remain unfilled[3]. But the epitaph which is alone remembered is that of the famous words cut in haste on the stone placed over his grave in Westminster Abbey; and though the monument which it was designed to erect was forgotten amidst the troublous times which ensued, no time will efface the brief but sufficient legend:

'O rare Ben Jonson!'

Character of his combativeness.

I have dwelt at comparative length upon the outward circumstances of the life of Jonson, both because his long career as a dramatist spans so considerable a period of the history of our dramatic literature, and because there are few authors whose personality is so distinctly and abundantly reflected in their writings. The reason of this is of course in the case of Jonson (as in the case of Pope, to whom the remark even more emphatically applies) that he

[1] See the *Leges Convivales* (Cunningham, vol. iii), and Gifford's note. One rule is particularly good: 'Insipida poemata nulla recitantor;' and another likewise deserves quotation: 'Vina puris fontibus ministrentur aut vapulet hospes.'

[2] Cf. *Underwoods*, lxvi.

[3] These tributes, which include poems by the famous Lord Falkland, by Cleveland, Waller, Cartwright, and Ford, and among less-known dramatists by May, Habington, Mayne, Rutter, and Meade, were published six months after Jonson's death under the title *Jonsonus Virbius*. (See Cunningham, iii. 496 *seqq.*)



exercised his literary gifts with the fullest consciousness both of his ends and of the means which he applied to them—a consciousness of which I think it may be said that it is peculiarly characteristic of great writers of a rank below that of the very greatest. In his works as in his life, it seems to have been impossible for Ben Jonson not to make straight for the goal which he had in view, loudly announcing his purpose to any one who cared to listen, and not avoiding the noise of the race-course or the bruises of an occasional collision. Thus the literary atmosphere in which he was at home was no tranquil one—

> ἐν δὲ πᾶς ἐμεστώθη δρόμος
> κτύπου κροτητῶν ἁρμάτων· κόνις δ' ἄνω
> φορεῖθ'· ὁμοῦ δὲ πάντες ἀναμεμιγμένοι
> φείδονται κέντρων οὐδέν[1].

His combative character jarred upon the gentler nature of Drummond, and may have often wreathed in smiles the serene countenance of one with whom he was brought into more frequent contact. But it is clear that there was no malice beneath this outspokenness; he often talked too loudly and too plainly, but it would I think be difficult to point to instances where he spoke with conscious untruthfulness. He coloured highly, but not falsely. 'Of all styles he loved most to be named Honest,' nor was the epithet undeserved which he boasted of having had applied to him in 'one hundreth letters[2].'

His self-consciousness.

There may be something diverting to us, but there is assuredly also something honourable to him, in the attitude which he consistently took up towards the public. Undoubtedly there was some force as well as much bitterness in the retort of a popular critic to Ben Jonson's scornful invective against 'the loathèd stage and the more loathsome age:'

> 'To rail men into approbation
> Is new to yours [*i. e.* your lute] alone:
> And prospers not: for know,
> Fame is as coy as you
> Can be disdainful[3].'

[1] Soph. *Electr.* 713–6.

[2] See *Conversations.*

[3] See Owen Feltham's *Answer to* Jonson's *Ode (to himself)*; in Cunningham,

But, apart from the moral courage, a quality by no means generally characteristic of popular literature, calling for acknowledgment in one who

> 'Could (with a noble confidence) prefer
> His own, by right, to a whole theatre;
> From principles which he knew could not err[1],'

there is a proof of true intellectual power in the consciousness which was the basis of this boldness. Not only was Jonson brave enough to let the public know that the laws of his art, and not the measure of their applause, determined his estimate of himself and his works[2]; but like a true artist he sought no applause except where he thought himself deserving of it[3]. Thus it was no unmerited tribute to his memory, when it was sung of him after his death that his

> 'thoughts were their own laurel, and did win
> That best applause of being crowned within[4].'

His anxiety for the approbation of the judicious.

But if Jonson showed little anxiety for the sweet voices of the general public, he was at all times most anxious for the approbation of the judicious. Ever and again he appeals from 'pretenders' to 'understanders[5],' from 'the reader in ordinary' to 'the reader extraordinary[6],' and it is to the latter that he 'submits himself and his work.' Nor can it be doubted that the appeal, though not always made in prudent or conciliatory terms, was always made in a manly and honest spirit[7].

ii. 386. The warning is the same as that conveyed in the French proverb: 'On prend plus de mouches avec du miel, qu'avec du vinaigre.'

[1] Cleveland, in *Jonsonus Virbius*.

[2] 'If you dare damn our play in the wrong place we shall take heart to tell you so.' (*Magnetic Lady*, act i, *ad fin.*) Cf. the humorous attack upon the perfunctory criticism of 'capricious gallants' in *The Case is Altered* (ii. 4). See also the Prologue to *The New Inn*.

[3] 'It is as great a spite to be praised in the wrong place, and by a wrong person, as can be done to a noble mind.' (*Discoveries*.)

[4] Cartwright, in *Jonsonus Virbius*.

[5] See the address *To the Reader*, prefixed to *The Alchemist*.

[6] See the addresses prefixed to *Catiline*.

[7] In *Cynthia's Revels* however, in the Epilogue at all events, he seems to pass the limit which separates self-consciousness from arrogance. And I am afraid that, in spite of the deprecation of that quality in the Prologue to *The Poetaster*,



His quarrels

To the goodwill of his literary associates there is no reason to suppose Jonson to have been indifferent. While he was certainly far from courting it by flattery, his commendation, when bestowed, was, like everything else which proceeded from him, liberal in its amount. He had his likings and dislikings like most men, and spoke them more freely than most. Into the merits of the quarrels which were the result of this outspokenness it is unnecessary to enquire, especially as the whole case can in no instance be before us. His attack upon Munday (in *The Case is Altered*) is hardly worth notice, considering the insignificance of its object, and the legitimateness of the fun made of him. In his disputes with Dekker and Marston it is impossible to determine where the original fault lay; if Ben Jonson however opened the quarrel, he also by his temporary abandonment of comedy put an end to its most virulent phase. Of his quarrels with Inigo Jones the more enduring seems to have originated in the jealousy of the architect rather than the envy of the poet[1]. On the other hand, if the *Conversations* with Drummond are full of caustic remarks on his literary contemporaries[2], they also contain tributes of praise manifestly the result of independent

and his friendships.

the tone of that play is of a similar description. But Jonson was then standing at bay; and his whole bearing as a dramatist should not be judged by instances taken from an exceptional period of his career. How in this period he lost the self-control which comes from self-knowledge is sufficiently illustrated by the circumstance that in the introductory words to the *Apologetical Dialogue* (appended to *The Poetaster*) he speaks of his enemies as having 'provoked him,' and of himself as having 'neglected them ever'! This assumption of indifference is too wonderful to be attributable to anything but delusion.

[1] 'He said to Prince Charles of Inigo Jones, that when he wanted words to express the greatest villaine in the world, he would call him ane Inigo.'

'Jones having accused him of naming him behind his back, A foole; he denied it; but, says he, I said, He was one arrant knave, and I avouch it.' (*Conversations.*) See also the *Expostulation with Inigo Jones*, and the *Epigram* on him (Cunningham, vol. iii); and cf. *infra* as to the *Tale of a Tub*.

[2] 'Drayton feared him; and he esteemed not of him. . . . Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses. . . . Day and Middleton were base fellows. . . . Daniel was at jealousies with him. . . . Daniel was a good honest man, had no children; but no poet. . . . Done for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging,' &c. &c.

judgment[1]. Nor was it, as has been already said, only the young aspirants to literary fame who looked up to him in his later days; but the whole literary world of his times; and throughout their lives grave men of letters such as Camden and Selden seem to have affectionately adhered to him, doubtless from motives of personal esteem as well as of intellectual admiration.

Jonson and Shakspere.

It may indeed be questioned whether the long-prevalent notion of Jonson as a quarrelsome egotist would have maintained itself, even with the specious support of the evidence of the *Conversations*, had it not been for the perverse ingenuity which endeavoured to fasten on his memory the charge of a consuming jealousy against the greatest of all his literary contemporaries. While on the one hand we cannot permit ourselves to give absolute credence to most of the pleasant traditions concerning the personal intimacy between Ben Jonson and Shakspere—and pleasant they nearly all are—it must on the other hand be asserted that the supposed proofs of Jonson's malignity against Shakspere as a writer have collapsed before a close enquiry into their foundations. That Ben Jonson, who criticised whatever he read, also criticised Shakspere is certain. In the *Conversations* he once says of Shakspere that he 'wanted arte,' an observation the value and the justice of which entirely depend on the meaning Jonson attached to the term, which he may be fairly presumed to have interpreted to Drummond[2]. On the other hand we have the famous lines, *To the Memory of my beloved Master William Shakspeare, and what he hath left us*, and an almost equally well-known passage in the *Discoveries*. Of the former, which were printed with Jonson's name under the portrait of Shakspere prefixed to the First Folio,—the very fact of his having been

[1] So of Donne, Chapman, Southwell. Of Fletcher and Chapman he said that they were 'loved of him;' and went so far as to observe that 'next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could make a Mask.' For tributes of friendship to various other persons see *Epigrams* and *Underwoods*, *passim*.

[2] The other observation on Shakspere, as to the 'shipwrack in Bohemia,' is, as Gifford says, natural and harmless.



invited to write the verses shows the light in which Shakspere's old fellow-actors regarded the relation between the poets,—I have already given my opinion[1]. To me words have no meaning, if these lines are to be regarded as grudging, or as anything but the tribute of true friendship and loving admiration. The passage in the *Discoveries* is critical in intention; but the very candour of the judgment enhances the value of the affectionate appreciation which animates it; while the essence of the criticism itself cannot be considered untrue except by the blind worshippers of the letter of Shakspere's works.

But it was not on these well-known passages that the attacks upon Ben Jonson, as a malignant caviller against his greater fellow-poet, were founded. A diligent search was made in Jonson's plays for passages which might be construed into allusions to productions of Shakspere's; and after a number had been found which were regarded as indubitable sarcasms, it was argued that cumulatively they proved envy and malice on the part of their author. With the aid of a previous essay in the same direction as his own (by Gilchrist), Gifford, in his edition of Ben Jonson, applied his trenchant intellect to an examination of all the passages in question[2], and arrived at the result that the charge which they were supposed to substantiate was to be absolutely and altogether rejected. He has done the task once for all, and to his essay nothing remains to be added.

But a single remark should be added, by way of caution, before I quit the subject. There are doubtless passages in Ben Jonson in which a satirical allusion may be traceable, some in which it is almost certainly traceable, to this or that Shaksperean play[3]; but the nature of the satire requires consideration even after the satirical intention has been admitted. And the harmlessness of these

[1] *Ante*, p. 278, note 3.

[2] See Gifford's *Proofs of Ben Jonson's Malignity, from the Commentators on Shakspere* (*viz.* Malone, Steevens, G. Chalmers, Weber, and S. Jones).

[3] *e.g.* in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (to *The Tempest*), and *ib.* ii. 1 (to *Julius Cæsar*); in the Induction to *The Staple of News* (to *Julius Cæsar*); nor can I see any objection against including *The Devil is an Ass* (ii. 1; to *Richard III*, or to Shakspere's Histories in general).

few passages—which are at the most to be regarded as genial banter of a friend—will to the candid mind furnish proofs of a spirit the very reverse of that attributed to Jonson in his sentiments concerning Shakspere[1]. Had Jonson thought fit to make fun of his great contemporary in the spirit in which Aristophanes made fun of Æschylus—seeking to characterise him at once in his great qualities and in the supposed defects of those qualities—only a shallow judgment would find in this a proof of malignity; but the truth is that Jonson never passes beyond an occasional jest wholly devoid of malice of any kind; whence it results that the charge against him is not so much unfounded as ill-founded, but not the less in itself empty and absurd.

Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher.

With Beaumont and Fletcher, more especially perhaps with the former, Jonson's relations were of the pleasantest kind. That Beaumont assisted him in *Sejanus*, is a very doubtful conjecture; that the 'censure' of Beaumont was sought by Jonson for all his writings, is only a late report; but of Beaumont's boundless enthusiasm for Jonson, and of the affectionate regard returned by the latter, there are abundant proofs. With Fletcher too he exchanged expressions of goodwill[2].

[1] It should be admitted that there is a single passage of which this remark will not hold good. In the *Ode to Himself*, written by Jonson in bitterness of spirit after the failure of his *New Inn* (*vide ante*, p. 533), he says—

'No doubt some mouldy Tale
Like Pericles, and stale
As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—
Scraps out of every dish
Thrown forth, and raked into the common tub,
May keep up the Play-club.'

In this and the following stanza it is difficult not to recognise the angry sarcasm of disappointment; but, as has been seen (*ante*, p. 422), it is very doubtful whether *Pericles* was regarded by contemporaries as a Shaksperean play. That there is a certain degree of cruel accuracy in the description, does not of course affect the question, though it might be held to justify the exceptional spirit of the invective.

[2] See Dyce's Introduction to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, xxiv; Beaumont's commendatory verses to *Volpone*, *Epicoene*, *Catiline*, Fletcher's to *Catiline*; Beaumont's *Letter to Ben Jonson*; Jonson's lines to Fletcher 'upon his *Faithful Shepherdess*;' his charming lines *To Francis Beaumont* (Epigram lv); and the *Conversations*. And cf. *infra*, chap. vii.



Jonson and his friends and enemies.

So much as to the relations between Jonson and his contemporaries, as far as they can be ascertained from the evidence of his sayings and writings. Such a man generally has warm friends and bitter enemies; and as we have seen sufficient proof that he possessed many of the former, so he tells us that he suffered deeply from the latter. It was his misfortune to have 'a pair of ears unskilful to hear lies, or have those things said of him which he could truly prove of' the slanderers themselves[1]. And so he passed through the conflicts of his life, till at last the sword of that brave mind, bruised and hacked and battered, but not so far as we know ever dishonoured, was sheathed in the peace of the grave.

His non-dramatic works.

It is difficult to turn from the personality of a man whom one seems to know so well, even to find him again in his works. It will not be forgotten that of these works it is only part—though the most important part—can here be surveyed. But of many of Jonson's characteristics, his learning, his industry, his versatility, a complete view can only be gained by those who, after reading his dramas and masks, have some attention to spare for his miscellaneous poems, the *Forest*, the *Underwoods*[2], the *Epigrams*[3], the *Translations from the Latin Poets*[4], even the rough draft or materials (for the MS. itself perished in the fire of his library) of his *English Grammar*. And even then it will be remembered how much an untoward calamity destroyed of the results of a laborious life. Least of all ought the *Discoveries* to be neglected,—a species of commonplace-book of aphorisms flowing out of the poet's daily readings—his communings with himself in the solitude of his library, as the *Conversations* are his communings with an auditor to whom he after all told less of his real mind than he told to himself. The

The Discoveries.

[1] See the striking passage in the *Discoveries* (Cunningham, iii. 407); and cf. Crites' first speech in *Cynthia's Revels*, iii. 2.

[2] The *Epistle to Sir Edward Sackville* in the *Underwoods* is stated (by Gifford) to have been Horne Tooke's favourite poem.

[3] Which he termed 'the ripest of his studies.' It should be remembered that Jonson's notion of an epigram was not of the limited kind usual in modern literature, but rather corresponded to Martial's, as defined by Paley.

[4] Especially, of course, *Horace his Art of Poetry*.

Discoveries are full not only of acute observation, but of ripe and true wisdom. By no means confined to remarks on the theory of style and of the literary art (though these are masterly and generally sound), the collection also contains some very noteworthy remarks on government[1] and education[2]. And upon the whole these aphorisms are to be called anything but egotistical, while they breathe the spirit of a highly-cultivated and nobly self-conscious man of letters, honourably proud of both the utility and the dignity of his own profession. Ben Jonson's moral probe here, as in his best comedies, is very keen and very sure[3].

His learning,

Already in the above brief remarks evidence has accumulated of Ben Jonson's learning, of which we shall meet with abundant illustrations in his plays. He had recognised the value of study in his youth, and he clung to the habit of it through life, till his learning had become part of him[4]. His unusually robust memory[5] was no doubt a serviceable friend to him in his labours. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that he wrote a play in fifteen days, I should imagine him to have been a slow worker. The fact that he wrote all his verses first in prose is no doubt explained by the reason which he assigned for it, that 'so his Master, Cambden, had learned him.' His theory, concerning which much might be said on either side (indeed Drummond states that Jonson's own remarks on the subject were contradictory), was that 'verses stood by sense without either colour or accent;' and it may be worth while to remember that

memory,

and probable method of work.

[1] Jonson was a supporter of the principle of monarchy based on popular affection, and a bitter adversary of mob-rule.

[2] See the passage—very English in spirit—advocating public-school education.

[3] See in particular the Notes entitled *Ingeniorum Discrimina*.

[4] 'Such as accustom themselves and are familiar with the best authors, shall ever and anon find somewhat of them in themselves.' (*Discoveries*.) See also the passage *ib*. headed *Imitatio*.

[5] 'I myself could, in my youth, have repeated all that ever I had made, and so continued till I was past forty; since, it is much decayed. Yet I can repeat whole books that I have read, and poems of some selected friends, which I have liked to charge my memory with.' (*Discoveries*.) Among these he mentions in the *Conversations* Wotton's 'verses of a happie lyfe,' and 'a peice of Chapman's translation of the 13 of the Iliads.'

the most finished of Goethe's dramas were likewise translated from prose into verse[1]. Here I mention the circumstance merely as illustrating the method of Jonson's literary workmanship, which must have essentially differed from Shakspere's. Indeed, one might fancy that the motto which he chose for his arms had reference to his literary labours; for in the actions of his life, so far as we know them, there is little of the quality which one of its alternative words expresses[2].

His dissipations.

These features are perhaps not those usually associated with the memory of Ben Jonson, which we more readily connect with the 'lyrick feasts'

> 'Made at the Sun,
> The Dog, the Triple Tun[3],'

the Mermaid, the Devil, or any other Elisabethan tavern of which the name occurs to us. Let us then, if we will, imagine his portly presence (of which he has himself drawn a sufficiently distinct portrait[4], less flattering than the likeness which his admirers found in him to the Greek comic poet Menander[5]) surrounded by all the materials of enjoyments which he knew how to appreciate; let us fancy him enforcing the most genial of his 'convivial laws,' and towering above all his companions in the contests of wit, and in the flow of verses, which

> 'Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.'

Let us picture him quaffing more than one

> 'pure cup of rich Canary wine,'

which he says is that 'which most doth take my Muse and me;' and exceeding the bounds which he assigns to his own

[1] *viz. Iphigenia* and *Tasso.*

[2] 'His armes were three spindles or *rhombi;* his own word about them, *Percunctabor* or *Perscrutator.*' (*Conversations.*)

[3] Herrick, *Ode for Ben Jonson.*

[4] See the poem, described by him as a 'Picture of himselfe,' which he sent to Drummond (*Conversations*, p. 39). A good point is made of Jonson's size as contrasted with his sensitiveness in the *Satiromastix:* 'Thou hast such a villainous broad back, that I warrant th'art able to bear away any man's jests in England.'

[5] See Cleveland's *Ode to Ben Jonson* (Cunningham, ii. 389):

> 'Thou art our whole Menander, and dost look
> Like the old Greek.'

modest domestic hospitality[1]. For it is certainly probable that there was some ground for Drummond's sneer at his love of wine; and it cannot have been in his nature to be less prodigal of his social than of his literary powers. Doubtless it was in such moments that he gave way to some of the failings in his character; to the excess of self-consciousness which made him in 'his merry humor wont to name himself the Poet[2],' to licence of expression, and to intolerance of those men and things which he may have at times condemned because he disliked, rather than disliked because he condemned them. But on the one hand we may credit Herrick's proud assertion that the 'clusters' of associates who acknowledged Jonson as their chief made him and his companions 'nobly wild, not mad;' and again, there was something in his nature which excuses, though it may not justify, the alternation of violent delights with arduous labours. It is not clear whether he is speaking of himself in the following passage in the *Discoveries;* but I think he was describing himself in it, consciously or unconsciously; and with it I may conclude my sketch of Ben Jonson, in order to turn (as the passage itself does) to the writings in which after all is to be found the best expression of what was most characteristic of the man himself:—

A self-drawn portrait.

'I have known a man vehement on both sides, that knew no mean, either to intermit his studies, or call upon them again. When he hath set himself to writing, he would join night to day, press upon himself without release, not minding it, till he fainted; and when he left off, resolve himself into all sports and looseness again, that it was almost a despair to draw him to his book; but once got to it, he grew stronger and more earnest by the ease. His whole powers were renewed; he would work out of himself what he desired; but with such excess as his study could not be ruled; he knew not how to dispose his own abilities, or husband them, he was of that immoderate power against himself. Nor was he only a strong, but an absolute speaker and writer; but his subtlety did not shew itself; his judgment thought that a vice: for the ambush hurts more than is hid. He never forced his language, nor went out of the highway of speaking, but for some great necessity or apparent profit; for he denied figures to be invented for ornament, but for aid; and still thought it an extreme madness to bend or wrest that which ought to be right.'

[1] See *Epigram* ci, *Inviting a Friend to Supper.*

[2] One is reminded of Dickens' liking (doubtless only half-ironical) for the epithet of 'the Inimitable,' applied to him, I think, in America.

Classification of Jonson's dramatic works.

The dramatic works of Ben Jonson fall with perfect distinctness under the three heads of tragedies, comedies, and masks or entertainments of a similar description. *The Sad Shepherd* alone, which has come down to us in an unfinished state, belongs to a species of a mixed kind—the pastoral drama—and may be considered by itself, intermediately between the comedies and the masks.

Historical tragedies.

Though separated in the dates of their production by a considerable number of years, the two historical tragedies of Ben Jonson will be appropriately noticed in conjunction with one another. The common characteristics of *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are not only a laborious and conscientious research which has alternately attracted the admiration and the sneers of critics, but a vigour and distinctness of characterisation and a constructive skill rarely to be found united in any of Ben Jonson's contemporaries. What his historical tragedies lack to make them the peers of Shakspere's, is not reality, not historic perception, not dramatic power, but the presence of that superhuman light which flashes into sudden clearness the unbridged distances, and in a moment reveals the hill-tops and the valleys, the jutting crags and the cavernous recesses of human nature[1]. The mighty surprises of genius are foreign to the poetic idiosyncrasy of Ben Jonson.

Neither *Sejanus* (which was first acted at the Globe Theatre in 1603, Shakspere taking a part in it, and experienced an unfavourable reception from the popular part of the audience) nor *Catiline* (which met with a similar reception on its first production in 1611) is to be numbered among those works which can be fully appreciated at once or without some degree of preparation. With his usual fierceness towards incompetent judges, Ben Jonson in publishing the latter play, informed the 'reader in ordinary'

[1] It must be conceded to Gifford that there is no proof, nor even any probability, of Shakspere's having been the 'happy genius' who contributed passages of his own to the play of *Sejanus* as acted, which passages were afterwards conscientiously expunged by Ben Jonson on sending the play to the press. (Gifford thinks Fletcher more likely.) In *Sejanus* as we have it there are certainly no passages in the slightest degree suggesting the Shaksperean touch, except perhaps the first lines of the speech of Arruntius, act iv. sc. 5.

that 'men judge only out of knowledge,' and submitted his work to the 'reader extraordinary' alone. But though it is difficult for those who may chance to possess some of the requisite knowledge to place themselves in the position of those who are without it, it seems allowable to assert that the disfavour with which these tragedies were first received was an error of judgment in itself; for though the whole of their merit can only be clear to the classical student, their dramatic power should alone (as indeed it subsequently did) have insured their immediate success.

Sejanus his Fall (acted 1603).

The educated reader (without in the least claiming for himself the designation of an 'extraordinary' one) will I think be inclined to prefer the earlier and less known of these two historical tragedies to its successor. And this, not because *Sejanus his Fall* is freighted for the benefit of scholars with a heavy ballast of classical quotations giving chapter and verse for every turn in the action and every reference in the dialogue. This apparatus Jonson defends as being, not an affectation of a kind which he 'abhors,' but necessary to the defence of his own 'integrity in the story.' It is really unnecessary for the educated reader, who on such an occasion rather prefers to recognise than to be reminded; while for the uneducated it is, to say the least, bootless. But admiration of a more genuine kind is challenged by the success with which Jonson has as a dramatist solved one of the most delicate problems of its kind known to historical students. Gifford has well observed that this drama 'might have been more appositely termed the triumph of Tiberius than the *Fall of Sejanus*;' and in the developement of the character of the former lies indeed the chief interest of this remarkable work. Jonson's character of Tiberius is a psychological masterpiece, whether or not it be a correct historical interpretation. There is only a single hitch in the conception. That in his old age Tiberius degraded himself into a slave of lust, is even less accounted for as a fact in the play than it is as a historical tradition. One modern historical critic at least has been found to doubt it altogether; but the objection to Jonson's introduction of it lies in the absence of all

preparation for it in the previous course of the drama[1]. In other respects the conception of Tiberius as the incarnate hypocrisy of tyranny attempting to walk in popular and legal forms is, as I have said, masterly[2].

Jonson's skill is, however, far from being confined to an adequate reproduction of his materials, though the manner in which he has combined them is in itself most creditable to his untiring ingenuity. The whole picture of the tyrant's mind is unfolded in a few admirably-devised scenes; and the ingenuity with which in the letter containing the doom of Sejanus the dramatist supplements and completes the historical account is a most noteworthy instance of inventive boldness and constructive sureness[3].

For the character and fate of Sejanus himself Jonson has found the true key in making his impious insolence the supreme reason of his fall, and thus assigning to it a tragic cause beyond the jealous fears of the despot. He says, at the very moment when Nemesis is upon him:

> 'Of all the throng that fill th' Olympian hall,
> And, without pity, lade poor Atlas' back,
> I know not that one deity, but Fortune,
> To whom I would throw up, in begging smoke,
> One grain of incense, or whose ear I'd buy
> With thus much oil . . . .
> To her I care not, if, for satisfying
> Your scrupulous phant'sies, I go offer[4];'

[1] The 'decreed delights' of the Emperor's retirement are quite suddenly mentioned by him, act iii. sc. 3. The historical critic referred to is Adolf Stahr. Dean Merivale, in his admirably judicial estimate of Tiberius' career, has not ventured to doubt that there was a foundation for the traditions of Capri. By a slip of a kind very unusual with him, Jonson has applied Tacitus' mention of Tiberius' secret debaucheries at *Rhodes* to the later period of his life (act iv. sc. 4), and has thus missed what was an opportunity for *preparing* the difficulty.

[2] What the elaboration of such a conception implies, may be realised by those who are acquainted with the dramatic crudities which in modern days have sought to deal with a not dissimilar problem—the dramatic interpretation of the character of Cromwell.

[3] Objection has, however, been taken, and I think justly, to the perverted application in this letter (v. 10) of the famous exordium of the Tacitean original (*Annal.* vi. 6). Justly, not because Jonson was not at liberty to make any use he chose of it; but because the bitter force of the real meaning of the words is weakened by the more commonplace use here made of them; the saying was too famous and too characteristic to be used in any but its real sense.

[4] v. 1.

and the effective scene in the *sacellum*, where Sejanus after an ill-omened sacrifice overturns the image of even this unpropitious deity, is introduced with admirable skill to point the moral to the dullest apprehension[1]. Of the minor characters, it must be enough to observe that Jonson, with that power of characterisation which was his most conspicuous dramatic gift, has distinguished with consummate skill the various kinds of servility and resistance; on the ample outspokenness of Arruntius, a personage who reminds us of similar figures in Jonson's comedies, he has evidently dwelt with special love. The scene between Livia and her confident Eudemus, who combines the professions of physician, perfumer, and pimp, is an admirable combination of classical lore with satire applicable to Jonson's own age. Over the whole play is cast an atmosphere of vivid truthfulness, so that the reader feels transplanted among the miserable victims and the more miserable agents of a period when the consciousness of what Rome had been was still struggling with the conviction of what she had become; among the timid and selfish senators, the vile rhetoricians and provocative agents, and the few noble spirits whose despair lay in a comparison between the present and the past, whose consolation, as in the case of the finely-drawn character of the historian Cremutius Cordus, lay in a confident hope in the justice of posterity[2].

Catiline his Conspiracy (acted 1611).

The greater degree of popularity which has in the end accrued to Ben Jonson's other historical tragedy, *Catiline his Conspiracy*, is I think probably due to the fact that its subject is one of those which, like the Death of Caesar or the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the memory of the world has marked out as the typically impressive crimes of general

[1] v. 4. A scene which Coleridge calls 'unspeakably irrational.'

The moral of *Sejanus* may be said to be drawn in the observations headed *Tyranni.—Sejanus* in the *Discoveries* (Cunningham, iii. 405). It was a political moral perhaps more needed in the age in which the play was produced than any other. It is curious by the bye to find Hazlitt (speaking in 1820) declare himself 'half afraid to give any extracts' from *Sejanus*, 'lest they should be tortured into an application to other times and characters than those referred to by the poet.' Oddly enough, this tragedy of a favourite's fall was (in 1616) dedicated by Ben Jonson to one who was himself the son of a fallen favourite (Aubigny).

[2] See act iii. sc. 2.

history[1]. The subject had accordingly already been more than once treated on the English stage: Stephen Gosson's tragedy on it has been already noted[2] as singled out for commendation by the author himself; and Robert Wilson and Henry Chettle had likewise produced a tragedy of the same title, possibly a revised version of Gosson's play. Jonson however, as was usual with him, went to the fountain-head; and the sources of his *Catiline* are the classical authors, more particularly of course Sallust and Cicero, whom he had studied with the most conscientious diligence. But this play too abounds with numerous proofs that the 'cothurnus' of Jonson was as 'learned' as his 'sock'; he loved incidental illustrations of the classical knowledge in which he was steeped, while Shakspere only used the classics, or translations of the classics, as direct materials[3].

Catiline is only less interesting than *Sejanus*, because it presents no such difficult problem of characterisation as Tiberius. Within the limits of his subject, however, Jonson has fully availed himself of his opportunities. Each of the characters, notably those of the conspirators, stands out distinctly from the rest; perhaps in his effort to draw distinctly, the dramatist has rather overdrawn the humours of his personages,—the visionary imbecility of Lentulus[4], the braggadocio of Cethegus[5], the inhuman

[1] Schlegel, it may be observed, prefers *Sejanus* to *Catiline*, and Hazlitt seems to have been of the same opinion.

[2] Vide *ante*, p. 114. It will not occur to any one to do the shade of Voltaire the injustice of supposing his *Catilina*—with its noble conflict of public and private emotions in the bosom of Aurelia, and its magnificent conclusion introducing Cæsar as a *deus ex machinâ*—to have any connexion with so historical and dramatic a work as Ben Jonson's. With a tragedy *Catiline* by Croly (1822) I am unacquainted. It is praised by Geneste (x. 236).

[3] In act iii. sc. 1. Jonson is not correct in speaking of 'broken images of ancestors,' for the *imagines* which Cicero declares himself to be without were of wax. And is it not an error to make Catiline (act i. sc. 1) say that he

'stood candidate
To be commander in the Pontic War'?

[4] This however is admirable (act iii. sc. 3):

'*Lentulus:* I like not fire,
'Twill too much waste my city.'

[5] 'What a strange notion,' says Coleridge, p. 281, 'Ben must have formed of

ferocity of Catiline. On the other hand, the oratorical expansiveness of Cicero is delicately, though copiously, illustrated; the danger is avoided of rendering him ridiculous, though both his love of speech and his respect for his own achievements are allowed ample expression. Of Caesar and of Cato not enough is made; the key to the double-handed policy of the former is not clearly revealed, the latter appears too generally as the mere echo of Cicero[1]. The female characters of the play are drawn with a humour nothing less than exuberant. Jonson had acquired a deep insight into the causes of Roman degeneracy; and there is masterly satire in his picture of the wanton Fulvia and the vain Sempronia, puffed up with her knowledge of Greek and her belief in woman's right to take part in political 'movements.' Indeed, the dialogue between these two ladies, and that between Fulvia and her maid, are admirable examples of high comedy[2].

Though the Ciceronian and other speeches in this play are of great length, they are condensed and pointed to

a determined, remorseless, all-daring foolhardiness, to have represented it in such a mouthing Tamburlane, and bombastic tongue-bully as this Cethegus of his.'

[1] Except of course in the (historical) passage of the debate on the fate of the conspirators.

[2] Inveighing against Cicero, Sempronia says:

> 'And we must glorify
> A mushroom! one of yesterday! a fine speaker!
> 'Cause he has sucked at Athens! and advance him,
> To our own loss! No, Fulvia; there are they
> Can speak Greek too, if need were. Caesar and I,
> Have sat upon him; so hath Crassus too,
> And others. We have all decreed his rest,
> For rising farther.'

The 'Caesar and I' is inimitable. Immediately afterwards her 'learned ladyship' enquires: 'Is this gray powder a good dentifrice?' 'You see I use it,' replies Fulvia, who likewise has her self-consciousness, and in fact afterwards saves Rome, as it were *en passant*, to avenge herself upon her rival.—I cannot help pointing out a sly touch of humour in act iii. sc. 2, where Curius, reclaimed to loyalty by Cicero in the presence of Fulvia, assures him:

> 'Most noble consul, I am yours and hers,
> I mean my country's.'

This is even better than Byron's insolent 'He (Juan, and not Wordsworth).'



the course of the dramatic action with remarkable skill; it is only in the closing narrative of Petreius that the author permits himself a wholly independent flight of poetic description. The effort is adequate to the occasion; for Petreius' narrative gives tragic dignity to a catastrophe which, according to the historical course of the events reproduced in the drama, is in danger of no longer exciting any intense interest. The Ghost of Sulla speaks what resembles a prologue to the play; and between the acts there are so-called choruses, lyrical reflexions 'spoken,' as Gifford truly says, 'by no one and addressed to no one.' Their merit, which has I think been underrated, lies in the remarkable terseness of their diction, which is accommodated to a variety of chiefly short and partly unusual metres[1]. The general dialogue of this piece is perhaps superior in form to that of *Sejanus*, where I have observed a too frequent occurrence of interrupted and unfinished sentences.

The Fall of Mortimer (fragment).

No other tragedy was written by Ben Jonson; but he left behind him a fragment of one to be called *The Fall of Mortimer*, consisting merely of a few lines and the Argument, which latter shows him to have intended to introduce at the end of at least the first four acts choruses of different groups of commentators on events and characters belonging to or connected with the play.

Comedies.

Of Jonson's comedies the dates are, with two exceptions, established with certainty; and as these two plays are in point of time the first and the third, or the first and the second, of his extant dramatic works, it becomes possible to discuss this the most important[2] group of them in chronological order—no slight advantage in the case of so conscientious a writer.

It is extremely improbable that *The Case is Altered*, which is mentioned by Nash in his *Lenten Stuff*, published

[1] The *Chorus* following act ii. is in double stanzas of the metre familiar to the readers of *In Memoriam*.

[2] Hazlitt, I should imagine, stands alone in his opinion that 'Ben Jonson's serious productions are superior to his comic ones.'

in 1599, preceded *Every Man in his Humour;* but the place of honour may in any case be given to the last-named comedy, whether or not the date of its production is to be assigned to the year 1597 or to 1598.

For *Every Man in his Humour* is justly recognised by most critics as a work which is not only one of the happiest efforts of its author, but also holds a place peculiar to itself in our dramatic literature. It may, in a word, be regarded as the first important comedy of character proper produced on the English stage. I have elsewhere[1] given my reasons for not applying this designation to the earlier comedies of Shakspere; *The Merchant of Venice*, which probably preceded Jonson's play in date, may be regarded as a comedy hovering on the boundary-line between one of character and one of incident; and the date of the earlier version of *The Merry Wives*, to which I should certainly be inclined to give the former designation, is at least uncertain. A further literary significance attaches to *Every Man in his Humour* from the fact that a large proportion of it is in prose, for which Ben Jonson, following the example of Lyly, thus asserted a right on the comic stage which was in the end to become a prerogative.

Every Man in his Humour (first acted 1598, or 7).

Every Man in his Humour was consciously designed by its author to satisfy the demands made upon comedy by the Greek philosopher who established its theory, and to waive all elements which might interfere with the accomplishment of this purpose. In the Prologue he accordingly points out his intention to abstain from seeking to delight the audience by following the fashion of the day and courting applause by a history inadequately eked out by noise and creaking machinery, and to produce instead a play corresponding to the true object of comedy, which is

'To sport with human follies, not with crimes.'

He promises to be both observant of the limits thus imposed upon him by the demands of his art, and true to human nature. Taking advantage of the prevailing fancy

[1] *Ante*, pp. 493 *seqq.*

to apply the word 'humours' in and out of season to oddities or novelties of conduct, fashion, or manners, he exhibits under this name a series of characters whose peculiarities are decisively marked and made to stand out still more distinctly by the force of contrast. The plot which holds the action together is indeed slight,—perhaps too slight,—but not absolutely insufficient. The characters are all thoroughly real, and yet, with an art most remarkable in a beginner, kept very distinct from one another. The best is undoubtedly the immortal Bobadil, a military braggart of a quite peculiar species, wholly distinct *e.g.* from Falstaff or from Ancient Pistol, or from any other type which might be compared with him[1]. The scene in which Bobadil's ragged pride is brought to a fall (iv. 5) has few rivals in English comedy. The jealous usurer Kitely is to me less interesting. Among the minor characters a pre-eminence ought to be assigned to the famous water-carrier Cob, one of the best clowns of a developed kind in our drama; Master Stephen the country gull and Master Mathew the town gull are also excellent.

This play has, I think, generally been preferred by critics as well as by the popular taste to its companion-piece, to be next noticed; the former keeps, or till not long ago kept, the stage, which its successor did not[2]. Yet some of Ben Jonson's peculiar merits shine at least as strongly in *Every Man out of his Humour* as in the earlier play; and from a biographical and a critical point of view the later of the two perhaps possesses even superior interest.

In execution as well as in conception it is by far the

[1] Ancient Pistol is a mere modification of the regular Italian (and New Comedy) type of the *thraso*; in Falstaff the military element is only incidental; the conception of Bobadil has been well defined as 'the coward, assuming the dignity of calm courage.' See T. Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies*, ii. 54, where it is remarked that from Bobadil Congreve formed his Captain Bluffe (in *The Old Bachelor*).

[2] There is no notice of *Every Man out of his Humour* in Geneste as acted since 1682. *Every Man in his Humour*, revived with considerable *éclat* in the Restoration period, with an epilogue by Lord Dorset, was again produced by Garrick in a revised form and with a scene added by himself; and Kitely became one of his famous parts in comedy. See Davies, ii. 64.

Every Man out of his Humour (acted 1599).

more elaborate of the pair. The central idea of the play may be termed a philosophical one: viz. that every humour is curable by its own excess. In order that this notion may be consistently worked out, it is of course necessary that it should be clearly understood what meaning the author attaches to the term 'humour;' it is accordingly defined with great distinctness, while the fashionable abuse of the term is protested against [1]. As he employs the term,

[1] The passage is lengthy, but it is worth while to quote it, as I shall have frequent occasion to return to the conception involved, which in fact lies at the root of the distinction between comedies (or novels) of *character* and of *manners*.

'*Asp.* Why, humour, as 'tis *ens*, we thus define it,
To be a quality of air, or water,
And in itself holds these two properties,
Moisture and fluxure: as, for demonstration,
Pour water on this floor, 'twill wet and run:
Likewise the air, forced through a horn or trumpet,
Flows instantly away, and leaves behind
A kind of dew; and hence we do conclude,
That whatsoe'er hath fluxure and humidity,
As wanting power to contain itself,
Is humour. So in every human body
The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
By reason that they flow continually
In some one part, and are not continent,
Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition:
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his effects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluxions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.
But that a rook, by wearing a pyed feather,
The cable hat-band, or the three-piled ruff,
A yard of shoe-tye, or the Switzer's knot
On his French garters, should affect a humour,
O, it is more than most ridiculous.'

The supposed physical and physiological analogies in the above may go for what they are worth; but what is quite evident from this passage and the context is, that while the term 'humours' was applied to eccentricities of *manners* by the fashion of the day, Jonson desired to apply it to distinctions of *character* of sufficient significance to be each typical of its kind. Of course as a comic poet he confined himself to such types of character as are ridiculous: otherwise there is a rough resemblance between his notion of a ruling humour and Pope's idea of the *Ruling* or *Master-Passion*:

it is virtually equivalent to a ruling peculiarity of character, of a ridiculous kind. This play accordingly most emphatically deserves the designation of a comedy of character; in fact, the author intended that it should furnish a clear proof of what he could achieve in this direction; and the framework of the piece, as well as the adjuncts which it received on publication, emphatically challenged the critical judgment of the wise among audience and readers upon a definite issue. First, we have in the play, as it lies before us, a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the characters, described with the pregnant force in which Jonson excelled. Then, in the Induction, designed to make clear the author's standpoint to the audience, he introduces a poet, Asper, who discourses on his aims as a writer; and after a fashion not indeed invented on the stage by Jonson[1], but henceforth frequently resorted to by him, we are likewise introduced to two critics, Cordatus and Mitis, who accompany the entire progress of the play with a running comment of observations. It is true that the business of Cordatus is to expound the poet's reasons for his dramatic procedure, while

> 'Cast and mingled with man's very frame,
> The Mind's disease, its *Ruling Passion* came;
> Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
> Soon flows to this, in body and in soul:
> Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
> As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
> Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
> And pours it all upon the peccant part.'

Essay on Man, Ep. ii. 137 *seqq.*; and cf. *Moral Essays*, Ep. i. 174 *seqq.* On turning to Mr. Mark Pattison's (Clarendon Press) edition of the *Essay on Man* (p. 93) I find the following passage quoted from Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (bk. i), which perfectly illustrates the analogy of the conceptions of Ben Jonson and Pope: 'Neither is it sufficient to inform ourselves in men's ends and natures of the variety of these only, but also of the predominancy, what *humour* reigneth most, and what end is principally sought.'—As to the abuse of the word, common in the period of the production of the play, Gifford recalls a passage in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (i. 1), which comedy may in its earlier form have preceded Jonson's.

[1] An instance of it has already occurred to us in Nash's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592). (Cf. *ante*, p. 230.) The idea may be described as a combination of the use made by the Greeks of the ordinary chorus and of the parabasis respectively.

that of Mitis (who it must be said thoroughly deserves his name) is merely to urge objections in order at once to accept the refutation of them.

The action of the play itself is slight, but I think sufficient for its purpose; so that although *Every Man out of his Humour* was termed by its author a 'comical satire,' there seems no warrant for describing it, with Schlegel, as 'a rhapsody of ridiculous scenes without connexion or progress.' On the contrary, as bringing together a large variety of characters and contriving to apply to one and all of them the same kind of purge, it strikes me as arranged with extreme skilfulness. But the strength of the play of course lies in the characters themselves. All these are admirable—from Macilente the envious man and Carlo Buffone the brutal cynic[1] to Puntarvolo the pseudo-romantic knight, Fastidious Brisk the empty fool of fashion[2], and Fungoso of the Temple his still emptier imitator. We have besides Fallace the silly City lady and her doating spouse Deliro, and Saviolina the too-clever-by-half lady of the Court, with Sordido the usurious corn-merchant and his rustic brother Sogliordo, whom Shift, a queer Jack-of-all-trades, instructs in the fashionable art of 'taking tobacco[3].' All these are drawn to the life, so that the whole presents a picture of manners as well as of character of unsurpassed vivacity and truthfulness. In its aim the comedy is truly moral; and if in many passages the author displays no small measure of self-complacency, it must be allowed that he has done enough and more than enough

[1] Whalley thought that, notwithstanding the poet's asseverations, he had some particular person in view under this character, especially as Dekker in *Satiromastix* (*ad fin.*) makes 'Horace' forswear 'flinging epigrams about in taverns, under pain of being placed at the upper end of the table, at the left of Carlo Buffone.'

[2] I cannot help remarking on the one-sidedness of Schlegel's criticism, who thinks Osrick in *Hamlet* an eternal type, Fastidious Brisk a transitory caricature.

[3] Shift's profession is described as 'skeldring and odling.' The latter term I cannot, any more than Gifford or Nares, explain from any known origin; but '*skeldring*,' which they define as swindling, and which, Gifford says, seems principally used of mendicants pretending to have been soldiers, I should be strongly inclined to derive from the name of the river *Schelde*. (The term occurs several times in *The Poetaster*.)

to warrant the satisfaction with which he evidently regarded what is one of the masterpieces of English comic literature. The learning of Ben Jonson is very amply exhibited in this play, which abounds with reminiscences from the classics and Erasmus.

The Case is Altered (acted by 1599).

The date of *The Case is Altered* must lie between the latter part of 1598 and 1599; it was, as has been already seen, in existence in the latter year, and an allusion has been traced in it to Meres' *Palladis Tamia* published in the former[1]. It was performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels at the Blackfriars; and this might tend to fix its date in the summer[2], and therefore add another reason for supposing it to have been produced in 1599. Its relation in date to *Every Man out of his Humour* cannot be established.

The Case is Altered[3], however, by no means represents an advance upon the two comedies already noticed. It is essentially a comedy of intrigue, based on two Latin plays (the *Aulularia* and the *Captivi*), the plots of which are interwoven with some ingenuity. It therefore cannot be said strongly to display the peculiar characteristics of Jonson's dramatic genius, being rather a romantic comedy in Shakspere's earlier manner, but in general devoid of all poetic afflatus. Yet there were opportunities for poetic pathos both in the faithful love of Rachel for Paulo (seized I think in the fine scene v. 3), and in the friendship of Chamont and Camillo. The character of the miser Jaques is a copy and nothing more, and immeasurably inferior to Molière's Harpagon, a later reproduction of the

[1] Onion says to Antonio, who is intended for Anthony Munday: 'You are in point already for the best plotter.' Collier, i. 355; cf. *ante*, p. 234.—The relation in date to *Every Man in his Humour* therefore depends on the question whether the latter was first acted in 1597 or 1598.

[2] The King's Players acted at the Blackfriars in the winter, when the Globe was shut; and Mr. Collier therefore thinks it probable that the Children acted in the former in the summer, when the house was unoccupied by the King's Players. (*u. s.*, p. 356.)

[3] The title of the play was a proverbial expression. Cf. Lyly's *Mother Bombie* (v. 3): 'O, ho, the case is altered! goe thither then, and be haltered for me.' The phrase repeatedly occurs in Thomas Heywood's plays, and is also to be found in Chapman, Massinger, and Shirley.

same type[1]. The comic characters (Juniper, Onion, Pacue) are uninteresting, though the cobbler Juniper appears to have become popular. Generally, the character-drawing is slight; thus little is made of the difference between the sister *qui pleure* and the sister *qui rit*—the latter of whom is but a faint copy—or anticipation—of Beatrice[2].

One character in this play is however noteworthy, as intended to satirise a contemporary dramatist. 'Antonio Balladino, pageant poet,' is easily identifiable with Anthony Munday[3]; and thus this comedy shows Jonson to have at least as early as 1599 begun those literary attacks upon fellow-dramatists of which subsequent plays were to furnish more signal instances.

Cynthia's Revels (acted 1600).

In *Cynthia's Revels, or the Fountain of Self-Love* (as this extraordinary production is rather ominously called), the literary satire is of a general rather than a personal character, though of course it may contain many special allusions the force of which is lost to us[4]. Its intention as a literary manifesto is to contrast the ends and aims of a true poet, writing for the entertainment of the highest authority on matters of taste as on all other matters, with the imbecile follies of those who purvey for the demands of a depraved and absurd fashion. I should be unwilling to suppose that Jonson intended Crites as a direct representation of himself; the self-laudation of which in that case he would have been guilty would have to be condemned as absolutely intolerable; but that in the standpoint of Crites he wished to indicate his own, and that in particular passages he has virtually identified himself

[1] The obvious reminiscence of Shylock and Jessica in the scene between Jaques and his daughter Rachel (ii. 1) has been already pointed out. (Cf. *ante*, p. 190, note). See also the miser's lamentation (v. 3):

> 'Angels! ay, where? mine angels! where's my gold?
> Why, Rachel! O thou thievish cannibal!
> Thou eat'st my flesh in stealing of my gold.'

[2] The date of *Much Ado about Nothing* seems assignable to the years 1599–1600.

[3] Cf. *ante*, pp. 80, 234.

[4] *e.g.* the passage in the Induction about 'promoters of other men's jests,' which Gifford considers to refer to Lyly, Marston, and perhaps Dekker.



with the character, seem equally undeniable facts[1]. But a study of the play has convinced me that its allegory is general rather than particular,—except of course in the case of Cynthia herself, under whom Queen Elisabeth is flattered with unmistakeable unction. It may be that we have to seek for a reference to currents of feeling and opinion not concerned with matters of literary taste in such passages as that towards the conclusion of the play, where the poet appears indignantly to protest against the fickleness which presumed to speculate upon the declining years of the Virgin Queen[2].

While the intention of the play is obvious,—an appeal from the bad taste in fashion to the royal arbitress of taste on the one hand and the judgment of an unprejudiced

[1] Dekker in his *Satiromastix* says: 'You must be called Asper, and Criticus, and Horace;' referring of course to *Every Man out of his Humour*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *The Poetaster*. (In the 4th edition Crites is called Criticus.) But the view advanced in the text will I think commend itself from a comparison of such passages as Arete's speech (v. 3), where the man praised 'without hyperbole' may well be identified with the author, and Mercury's speech (ii. 1), where Jonson could hardly have intended to describe himself as 'a creature of most perfect and divine temper,' &c.

[2] See Cynthia's speech, v. 3, especially the lines

> 'For we are no less Cynthia than we were,
> Nor is our power, but as ourself, the same;'

and the allusions in

> 'For so Actæon, by presuming far,
> Did, to our grief, incur a fatal doom;
> And so swoln Niobe, comparing more
> Than he presumed, was trophæed into stone;'

and cf. the allusions to Actæon and Niobe in i. 1. Now, I think there can be little difficulty in concluding Actæon to refer to Essex, who for his 'presumption' in abruptly quitting Ireland and presenting himself before the Queen was committed to custody at the close of 1599, and in June 1600 (the year of the production of the play), after being examined before the Council, was ordered to keep to his own house. Again, I venture to suggest that in Niobe we may trace an allusion to Arabella Stuart, whose pretensions to the throne certainly began to be 'compared' with Elisabeth's decline from about 1598. But (at least until better informed) I should hesitate before tracing here signs of the 'rivalry between the Essexian and Cecilian factions' in which Mr. R. Simpson (see a letter to *The Academy*, Jan. 31, 1874) appears to seek the final cause of the quarrel between Dekker and Jonson; though Cecil was in favour of the succession of James, who, as has been seen, so speedily took notice of Jonson.

audience on the other[1],—its execution is, to say the least, perplexingly elaborate and intolerably lengthy[2]. The plot, such as it is, is buried beneath the characters, while the characters are buried beneath the dialogue, which again frequently consists of speeches of interminable length. It is equally difficult to understand how the audience should, as seems to have been the case, have borne with satisfaction such a tax upon their attention, and how the Children of the Chapel, who performed the play, should have been able to get their parts by heart. The comedy begins briskly enough with an Induction of great vivacity and humour, contrived between the children-actors in their own characters[3]; and the first act, which prepares what plot there is in the play, moves with comparative rapidity, although the resurrection of Echo has no real connexion with the action. Asotus and Amorphus who are introduced in this act remind us of Master Stephen and Bobadil; and are by far

[1] Gifford seems to regard the motto prefixed to the first (quarto) edition of *Cynthia's Revels* as obscure:

'Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio—
Haud tamen invideas vati, quem pulpita pascunt.'

But surely it is intelligible enough. The author has no Court patrons, and it is to the audience of a public theatre, from which he confesses to derive his means of support, that he appeals.

[2] Two-thirds of the enormous act v. (including the entire foolery about the School of Courtship) and a long passage in iv. 1 (the wishes of the ladies Moria, Philautia, and Phantaste) were however added in the folio of 1616.

[3] From a reading 'Sall' for 'child' in a passage in the quarto it appears that one of these children was the Salathiel Pavy, on whose death Jonson composed an epitaph (*Epigram* cxx) so exquisite that I cannot refrain from quoting the first two stanzas:

'Weep with me, all you that read
This little story:
And know, for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature.'

The thought of the concluding lines—

'But being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him'—

has probably been reproduced in a large number of epitaphs.



the best characters in the play[1]. The second act however, instead of making any real progress in the plot, adds a large number of new characters, which are *described* at far too great length; and as the play drags its slow length along, it becomes little more than a picture of manners, which though full of humorous touches[2], is far too elaborately exaggerated to be anything but a caricature. It will hence be evident that in this play Jonson allowed the theory of comedy which he had conceived, and which he here repeats[3], to run away with him into an extreme to be avoided as much as that to which he objected; and *Cynthia's Revels* may be more truly designated a 'comical satire' on the vagaries of preposterous tastes than even a comedy of manners, while it cannot be regarded as a comedy of character.

Without entering into any further examination of this play, it may be observed that the device of the effects of the fountain of self-love is not forcibly carried out; that the intermixture of allegorical with direct satire is far from uniformly happy[4]; and that the mask introduced into act v. as a specimen of an entertainment befitting the revels of Cynthia is commonplace, while the good taste of the mock litany to Mercury concluding the piece is, to say the least, questionable[5]. In short, the execution

[1] Amorphus' self-praise is particularly good, especially his statement (resembling Don Giovanni's in the opera) that he has been 'fortunate in the amours of three hundred forty and five ladies, all nobly, if not princely descended; whose names I have in catalogue.'

[2] The scene iii. 3, in which Amorphus instructs Asotus in the art of beginning a courtship, may be especially noted. And how excellent is the description of Philautia (ii. 1): 'She has a good superficial judgment in painting, and would seem to have so in poetry. A most complete lady in the opinion of some three beside herself.'

[3] In the fine *Prologue* he says that his Muse

'shuns the print of any beaten path;
And proves new ways to come to learned ears.

The term 'humours' is more than once dwelt upon; cf. especially Crites' speech, v. 2.

[4] Cupid's description of *Argurion* (Money) is founded on the *Plutus* of Aristophanes. Cf. as to *The Staple of News*. It may be here added that Jonson is indebted to Lucian for the humorous banter of Mercury as the god of thieves (i. 1), which Dryden imitated in his *Amphitryo*.

[5] It is ridiculed, but not on this ground, in *Satiromastix*.

of this play can hardly be held to justify the unbounded self-confidence with which the Epilogue concludes, although the effect upon the spectators, to which Jonson professed himself indifferent, seems in this instance to have been actually produced[1].

The Poetaster (acted 1601).

Whatever may be the degree of personality in the satire of *Cynthia's Revels*, there can be no doubt whatever as to the intentions of its successor, a play superior to it from every dramatic point of view. *The Poetaster, or His Arraignment*, exhibits no want of vigour or directness, nor can there be any mistake as to its design. If, as will hardly be denied, the satire errs on the side of excess, it must not be forgotten (though this of course furnishes no excuse for the artist) that the object of the play was to frighten off Jonson's adversaries from their scheme of avenging their real or supposed wrongs upon him[2]. This object was not accomplished; for Dekker in his *Satiromastix* 'untrussed' the 'humorous poet' with a fury redoubled by the new and unprecedented wounds inflicted by *The Poetaster*. But an opportunity was at least furnished to the public and to posterity of comparing the powers of the combatants, and the result of the comparison can never have admitted of a moment's serious doubt[3].

While therefore the character of *Cynthia's Revels* may be described as essentially (though anything but uniformly) defensive, *The Poetaster*, as its very name implies, exhibits the author in an attitude of attack. His intention is to

[1] 'I'll only speak what I have heard him [the author] say:
By —— 'tis good, and if you like't, you may.'
Gifford compares the closing lines of Fletcher's *Nice Valour*, which are identical in statement, but Jonson's rollicking self-confidence (for such it here is) remains unparalleled in expression.

[2] This is abundantly proved by the passage in iii. 1, where the actor says: 'We have hired him [Demetrius] to abuse Horace [Jonson], and bring him in, in a play, with all his gallants.' Cf. iv. 4: 'Come, we'll go see how far forward our journeyman is towards the untrussing of him.' Thus the very title of the projected play was already known. It may have been suggested by a passage in *Cynthia's Revels* (v. 2):

'*Asopus.* Trust me with trussing all the points of this action, I pray.'

[3] For a brief description of *Satiromastix; or, The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet, vide infra* (under Dekker).



turn the tables on his adversaries, of whom he has chosen two as the victims of his satire—the one because it was he who had been chosen to forge the expected bolt, the other for some reason not quite so obvious. The former is Dekker, who is identifiable with Demetrius, above all for the reason already given; the latter is Marston, who must be concluded to have been more odious to Jonson than Dekker, and whose style laid him peculiarly open to ridicule. Marston, as has been proved beyond all doubt, is the Crispinus of the play, the Poetaster proper[1]. To the 'arraignment' of these personages for having 'most ignorantly, foolishly, and, more like themselves, maliciously, gone about to deprave and calumniate the person and writings of Quintus Horatius Flaccus, poet and priest to the Muses; and to that end mutually conspired and plotted .... taxing him falsely of self-love, arrogancy, impudence, railing, filching by translation,' &c., the whole action of the comedy works up. The scene in which the trial and judgment take place (v. 1) is therefore the principal scene of the piece; and the trenchant vigour of its execution is undeniable. Horace (Jonson) after stating with unnecessary modesty that he is 'the worst accuser under heaven' manages his own case and pleads his cause with sufficient self-consciousness[2]. In the course of the proceedings Crispinus is relieved of the 'crudities' of his poetic diction by pills administered to him by Horace[3], and is finally with his helpmate bound over by an 'oath of good behaviour' to keep the peace towards the object of their spleen.

In this scene Jonson no doubt bore in mind *The Frogs* of Aristophanes, but it is quite needless to point out the vast difference between what it would be a mistake to term original and copy. The intention of Aristophanes is

[1] It is difficult to understand why, even before Gifford made the matter perfectly clear (see in particular his notes to iii. 1 and v. 1), Crispinus should have been thought to be Dekker.

[2] With the aid of Virgil as judge. See especially Virgil's speech, 'Before you go together, worthy Romans,' &c. (v. 1).

[3] This episode, though not very delicate, is inimitably ludicrous. See Gifford's notes to v. 1, tracing all or most of the words thrown up by poor Crispinus to Marston's works.

far elevated above that of Jonson, even allowing to the latter, as he should be allowed, credit for motives other than merely personal; in the satirical contrast of *The Frogs*, two geniuses of the highest order, two types of the deepest significance—historical and moral as well as literary—are opposed to one another, and the decision sought is one of the highest national, poetic, and human interest. And the element of personal motive is wholly absent, so that there is nothing to degrade a comic action of unsurpassed power.

But before Jonson could arrive at his final scene, the exigencies of the stage required a plot; and it was in a happy moment that he invented the general action of his play. It must have been written in comparative haste, for the enemy was upon him; and in fact he states that its composition only occupied fifteen weeks[1]. The scene is laid in Rome, at the Court of Augustus. The disguise is transparent enough, and it was hardly worth Jonson's while to take credit for having been considerate enough to adopt it[2]. It has, however, the advantage of removing the action into a less turbid atmosphere, and of enabling the author to display his learning, which he does without pedantry, and with much ingenuity of contrivance. But the introduction of a serious bye-plot about Ovid's amours with Julia is more or less gratuitous; and though the scene in which this part of the action culminates[3] is, in spite of its metaphysics, not devoid of pathos, it has no organic connexion with the real action of the piece. Several of the comic scenes in the earlier part of the play, on the other hand, are managed with extreme cleverness and vivacity, so in particular the entertainment of the poets by Chloe, an honest citizen's ambitious wife aspiring after the fashions of the Court[4], and the scenes in which Tucca plays a pro-

[1] See the passage in the speech of Envy, *ad in.* Dekker, who was a rough-and-ready playwright, considers fifteen weeks an unconscionably long period of incubation. See *Satiromastix*.

[2] See the *Apologetical Dialogue.*

[3] iv. 6. Julia appears at her chamber window, like Juliet.

[4] ii. 1. The little character of Hermogenes (borrowed of course from Horace) is particularly amusing. 'Can he sing excellently?' asks Julia of Chloe.

minent part. For though Captain Tucca has really nothing to do with the action, he is the most amusing character in the comedy—so amusing indeed that Dekker foisted him into his reply. He is a military bully of a special type, and as distinct from Captain Bobadil as he is from Falstaff, of whom he has most absurdly been regarded as a copy[1]. His peculiarity is a buoyant blackguardism which recovers itself instantaneously from the most complete exposure, and a picturesqueness of speech like that of a walking dictionary of slang.

But though there is of course abundance of literary satire in the earlier acts (the ridicule against the old style of bombastic tragedy in iii. 1 should be particularly noticed), and though Horace is worried by the importunities of Crispinus and decried by Demetrius sufficiently to leave no doubt as to the nature of the situation, the real business of the action, as already stated, only commences with the last act. Here the contrast between the true poets and the poetaster is made manifest; the intentions of Horace are vindicated; and the malice of his enemies is exposed. But, with felicitous modesty, the poetic honours are given, not to Horace, but to Virgil (who is even allowed to recite a long passage from his 'Æneids'). It would be indeed pleasant could we suppose Jonson to have meant under the name of Virgil to honour a fellow-poet, by acknowledging whose pre-eminence he would have given a very different significance to this extraordinary play. It is however more likely that Chapman is intended under the character[2].

'I think so, madam; for he entreated me to entreat you to entreat him to sing.'

[1] By Davies (*u. s.*, p. 82), whose criticism of this play is deservedly stigmatised by Gifford. Dekker in the preface ('to the World') of *Satiromastix* describes Captain Tucca as originally plagiarised from 'Captain Hannam,' and Gifford seems to regard this charge as proved. Where does Captain Hannam appear?

[2] See Gifford's note to the passage in v. 1, before the entrance of Virgil. No doubt the description is really more applicable to Shakspere than to the Roman poet, but I fear we have no right to make the application. It is odd by the bye that Gifford should deny the appropriateness to the author of the *Georgics* of the praise involved in the lines,

'That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment laboured and *distilled*
Through all the common uses of our lives, &c.

In the *Apologetic Dialogue*[1], which Jonson appended to this piece, but which he was, for a time at least, prohibited from repeating on the stage, he seeks to give a plain exposition of his motives in vindicating himself after the fashion which he had adopted in his play. 'The Author,' who here discourses after the manner of an Aristophanic parabasis, appears to have been acted by Jonson himself; and the manifesto was therefore as direct as he could have made it. In it he announced his intention—and it was a wise one—to abandon comedy for the present. When he returned to it from his first excursion into the more tranquil domain of tragedy, he had recovered himself from the effects of a literary controversy which, though it had been carried on by him with unexampled spirit, could not if further protracted have failed to exercise a baneful influence upon his progress as a dramatic poet.

Volpone, or, The Fòx (acted 1605).

When, after a few years' interval, Jonson in 1605 returned to comedy, it was a mightier, though a less tangible, foe whom he set himself to attack than the representatives of a depraved literary taste. In the Dedication to the Two Universities prefixed to the first impression (1607) of *Volpone, or The Fox*, he refers to the 'poetasters' of the time, as degrading the art of poetry; but the play itself is a moral, not a literary, satire in its aims, though one at least of the literary fashions of the day is incidentally derided[2]. The comedy of *Volpone*, beyond all doubt one of Jonson's most powerful efforts, is at once a picture of the moral depravity of the age and a bitter attack upon it—a disgusting picture beyond doubt, but neither was the age a pleasing one which was to produce such an episode as the Overbury case. In this play Jonson shows himself to have entirely overcome the tendency, noted in the comedies last-mentioned, to neglect the necessary element of action.

Chapman was suggested by the anonymous author of a book called *Shakespeare and Jonson. Dramatic Verses, Wit-Combats* (London, 1864), quoted by Bodenstedt in *Jahrbuch*, vol. i, 1865, p. 318.

[1] First printed in the Folio of 1616, so that, as Gifford says, it is impossible to say how long the injunction continued in force.

[2] See the sneer at the plagiarists of the *Pastor Fido* (iii. 2).

Italian models had probably helped to recall the importance of an effective plot even in a comedy aiming above all at the delineation of character. The scene of the play too is laid in Italy, at Venice, whose very name associates itself with the notion of dark intrigue; but at the same time the types introduced are those of human depravity in general, and so far as they are types of manners belong to an age rather than to a country.

To a modern reader there is something so revolting in the vice depicted in this comedy, that it is not easy to do full justice to its merits. Yet it long retained its hold over the English stage, while—which is less to be wondered at—the central character long continued to express to the popular mind the incarnation of the most loathsome kind of hypocrite. In Queen Anne's reign Dr. Sacheverell could in his notorious sermon point an attack upon the principles of the Revolution by alluding to the Lord Treasurer Godolphin under his nickname of the Old Fox or Volpone[1].

The story of this play is that of a villainous Venetian magnifico who, in order to attract the gifts of his friends and followers, feigns himself to be sick to death: he and his parasite persuade each of these hungry friends—the Vulture, the Crow, and the Raven, viz. Voltore (an advocate), Corbuccio, and Corvino—that he is to be Volpone's heir; and they fawn upon him accordingly with inconceivable baseness, but only to be one and all deceived. Ultimately, however, the Parasite or Fly (Moscha, a character drawn with inimitable vigour) turns round upon his master whom he has aided and abetted in this device; and the whole goodly party is brought to the justice which it richly merits. There is a farcical character in the play, or rather a pair of such—an English traveller who is a type belonging to other generations besides that of Ben Jonson, named Sir Politick Wouldbe, and his loquacious wife. These characters are of irresistibly comic force; but such is the loathsome nature of much of the villany in the play, that

[1] See Lord Stanhope's *History of England under the Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 405.

a robust digestion is required to go through the whole of it, in order to recognise the genuine power which it possesses. Coleridge, who like Schlegel acknowledges its high merits, remarks with truth that from its 'fertility and vigour of invention, character, language, and sentiment it is the strongest proof, how impossible it is to keep up any pleasurable interest in a tale, in which there is no goodness of heart in any of the prominent characters. After the third act, this play becomes not a dead, but a painful weight, on the feelings[1].'

It may be added that this comedy, which was acted with great applause at the Universities, abounds in the usual proofs of Jonson's learning; the anti-mask in act i. is founded on Lucian.

Epicoene (acted 1609).

Epicoene, or, The Silent Woman, which followed (again after a considerable interval) in 1609, resembles *Volpone* in the closeness of its construction, which in both plays scrupulously observes the unities of time and action. This obtained for the comedy the praise of Dryden, who subjected it to an 'examen' in his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy;* but when he goes on to say that the intrigue of *Epicoene* is 'the greatest and most noble of any pure unmixed comedy in any language,' exception may be taken to the extravagance of the praise. Coleridge is nearer the mark in calling it 'the most entertaining' of Jonson's comedies. It would in fact be difficult to say why *Epicoene* should not be described as, properly speaking, a farce. Its plot turns on a mere trick—perhaps the most successful trick ever played by a comic dramatist upon his audience, but still a trick pure and simple; while the fun drawn out of the supposition, that an old misanthrope who hates noise marries what he believes to be a silent woman, but what proves a talkative creature and is ultimately discovered to be a boy, is of a wildly improbable kind inadmissible in comedy[2]. But farce

[1] *Literary Remains*, ii. 276.—A very appreciative criticism of *Volpone*, by Cumberland, is quoted by Gifford.

[2] Garrick's blunder in giving the part of Epicoene to a woman is almost incredible. At the same time the plot was of course signally favoured by the practice of the stage in Jonson's time, when women's parts were always acted

though it is, it is one which none but a dramatist of wonderful comic genius could have written. Of its kind the piece is without a rival, unless we turn to the writings of a comic dramatist worthy to rank as Jonson's peer—I speak of course of Molière[1]. The briskness of the fun in the dialogue—only here and there falling into Jonson's favourite weakness for lengthy analyses of character—is even less remarkable than the fecundity of invention displayed in a series of effective situations. Instead of flagging, the play grows more and more amusing from act to act; the fourth, with the catastrophe of the two timid fools—one of the most laughable comic situations ever invented—surpasses all that has preceded it; but the fifth is even better, with its inimitable consultation on the question of Divorce, and its final surprise.

The play is full of characters admirably adapted to the action. The hero or victim of the main plot is Morose the misanthrope, who (like Wallenstein) hates noise and bids his barber 'answer him not but with his leg,' but who from the moment that Truewit enters 'with a post-horn' is subjected to the most awful trials imaginable. This character, it appears, Jonson borrowed, with the notion of the name, from a declamation of the Greek rhetorician Libanius[2], but the way in which the fancy is developed is of course original. Of native growth are the two fools—the one 'a whiniling dastard' and the other a 'brave heroic coward.' The former is Sir John Daw, who is of a literary turn, criticises the classics with extreme volubility[3], and uses by

by boys; so that the spectators must have been wholly unprepared for the final surprise.

[1] The thought of Molière constantly suggests itself to the reader of *Epicoene*. Not only is there a certain similarity in the situation (of course with every possible difference) to that of *Le Médécin malgré lui*, a hint of the *École des Femmes* (again with many differences) in the 'Ladies Collegiates,' and a resemblance to the jargon of Molière's doctors in the 'most unmatrimonial Latin' of the sham parson and lawyer in act v, but the exuberance of the farce and the vigour of the character-drawing throughout the piece irresistibly recall Molière in his gayest vein.

[2] See Gifford's note to i. 1. The character in Libanius is called Δύσκολος.

[3] ii. 2: 'There's Aristotle, a mere commonplace fellow; Plato, a discourser; Thucydides and Livy, tedious and dry; Tacitus, an entire knot, sometimes

way of oath the asseveration 'As I hope to finish Tacitus.' The latter is Sir Amorous La-Foole, not of the La-Fooles of Essex, but of the La-Fooles of London, though 'they all come of one house, the La-Fooles of the north, the La-Fooles of the west, the La-Fooles of the east and south—we are as ancient a family as any is in Europe—but I myself am descended lineally of the French La-Fooles—and we do bear for our coat yellow, or *or*, chequered *azure*, and *gules*, and some three or four colours more, which is a very noted coat, and has sometimes been solemnly worn by divers nobility of our house—but let that go by, antiquity is not respected now.' Then we have the Ladies Collegiates, devoted to the pursuit of a very undesirable course of education—a piece of satire aimed, it is said, at actually existing clubs of the day, combining absurd pretensions with profligate designs. Nor can Captain Otter be overlooked, with his bull, bear and horse, and his termagant wife; and lastly there is Truewit, the wire-puller of the intrigue and the expositor of the characters in general. All these characters are played off on one another with admirable effect, the bye-plots being skilfully interwoven with the main plot, and the construction of the whole being as perspicuous as the *dénouement* is unexpected. In a word, Jonson's comic genius is nowhere more happy than in this most amusing play, although it is impossible to reckon it among the most important efforts of his comic genius[1].

The Alchemist (acted 1610).

Fully equal in spirit to *Epicoene*, while incomparably bolder in the purport of its satire, is Jonson's next comedy, justly esteemed one of his foremost works. *The Alchemist* was an attempt to clear off the face of the earth—at least

worth the untying, very seldom . . . . Homer, an old tedious, prolix ass, talks of curriers, and chines of beef; Virgil, of dunging of land, and bees; Horace, of I know not what . . . . And so Pindarus, Lycophron, Anacreon,' &c. The whole passage is inimitable.

[1] The Prologues to *Epicoene* seem to show that Jonson was, in writing this play, well aware of the necessity to please—a necessity which he at times failed or scorned to recognise. His other anxiety was to defend himself against a false criticism which would at once condemn a piece so 'popular' in its action.



off so much of the earth as the London stage could influence —one of the greatest pests from which it suffered. And yet the nature of this pest, being at once contemptible and ridiculous, was precisely of the kind which it is within the legitimate province of comedy to assail. It is possible that the faithful enthusiasm of Jonson's editor may overestimate the effect produced by the assault; the subject is one which it must be left to special research fully to elucidate; but the result must have been great, and—which suffices for our purpose—what could be done by comedy in this direction was here done. The brand was set once for all upon a race of impostors as deleterious and as shameless as any that have ever availed themselves of the inexhaustible resource of human credulity[1]. When an author has done so much as this, he has performed his duty towards society; and it is unnecessary to adjust too nicely the relations between the *post hoc* and the *propter hoc* in estimating his services to a good cause.

The action of this play, which strictly observes the unities of both time and place, is carried on with unabating vigour from the opening, which is justly praised as excellent. On the other hand, there is a certain degree of carelessness about the close, a part to which, curiously enough, dramatists are at times less attentive than the public of a theatre. In this instance a great error is committed in allowing one of the conspirators (Face) to escape with impunity.

The characters are drawn with the utmost vigour, in particular of course those of the three confederates, Subtle, Face, and Dol, in whom Jonson appears to have had in view three real personages, protegees (till their real nature was discovered) of that impartial patron of useful, useless, and

[1] See Gifford's concluding note to the play. I must refrain from pursuing the subject into its historical details, which are endless. But it may be noted that on the stage Lyly had already exposed the alchemists in his *Gallathea* (1592), and that Jonson seems to have returned to the subject in his *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, a mask of uncertain date, but apparently later than the comedy.—It may be noted that the description of the destruction of the elixir (iv. 3) has been thought to have been suggested by the *Chanones Yemannes Tale* in Chaucer. (See an article, *Mediæval Projectors*, in *The Saturday Review*, Aug. 15, 1874.)

pernicious arts, the impotent star-gazer Rudolph II[1]. As a foil to these adventurers we have the greedy gulls, Sir Epicure Mammon and the rest, among whom however Tribulation Wholesome and his brother 'of the separation' must find special mention. The bitterness of the satire against the Puritans in such a scene as the first of the third act is intense; but in Jonson it was made doubly bitter by the industry with which he had, unlike most of his dramatic contemporaries, familiarised himself with materials for something more than a mere satire upon externals. The whole play is a signal instance of his habitual conscientiousness in details, from the learning on its main subject down to that on one with which he may be supposed to have possessed greater antecedent familiarity—the stock-in-trade of an honest tobacconist[2].

Bartholomew Fair (first acted October 31, 1614).

This command of characteristic detail is displayed in a still more extraordinary degree in the comedy with which, after an interval of a few years, the author of *The Alchemist* again came before a popular audience. He had in the meanwhile unsuccessfully produced his second tragedy (*Catiline*), and as usual, failure, where he thought himself to have deserved the reverse, had aroused in him a spirit of defiance. But to this he contrived to give expression in so novel and humorous a fashion in the *Induction* to *Bartholomew Fair*, that the manner of the appeal must have conciliated the good-will while it stimulated the curiosity of the spectators. When the play was afterwards produced at Court, the author (in the *Epilogue* written for the purpose) expresses himself more hesitatingly; but we do not know whether the play 'pleased the King[3].' On the public stage it became enormously popular—doubtless for two reasons: the incomparably vivid realism with which it treated a subject chosen with equal boldness and felicity,

[1] One of these (Kelly) is also mentioned in Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn* (iv. 2).

[2] See the description of Abel Drugger's shop (i. 1). Abel Drugger is a small character, but has been immortalised by Garrick's representation of it.

[3] It was certainly a favourite of his descendant Charles II. See Nichols, *Progresses of James I*, iii. 28.

and the broad humour with which it attacked the natural enemies of all frequenters of playhouses—the Puritans.

This comedy is too well known to need description. Its satire is of the directest and its fun of the broadest kind. It is said to contain more characters than have ever been brought together into any one other piece; and all these characters are from real life—the life of the London of the day. But there is sufficient plot to keep the whole well together, and the uproariously mirthful Puppet-show in the fifth act furnishes a climax to the interest. The amount of odd 'learning'—for so it must be called—crowded into the play is astonishing; it is a perfect dictionary of slang, and of slang of all sorts, from that of the horse-courser and the gingerbread-woman to that of Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, the 'Banbury man.' The broadest farce-effects are freely introduced; nor is any method of creating a ludicrous effect eschewed, except—if the author is to be believed on his word [1]—that of personal satire. There can be no doubt that the view to the contrary, which supposed Lanthorn Leatherhead to be intended for Inigo Jones, is founded on error [2].

Bartholomew Fair is of its kind without a rival [3]. It is a descriptive comedy of infinite humour, invaluable as a picture of manners, and as fresh in its realism as on the day when it was first produced. As such it must live.

[1] See Induction: 'In consideration of which, it is finally agreed, by the aforesaid hearers and spectators, That they neither in themselves conceal, or suffer by them to be concealed, any stale-decypherer, or politic picklock of the scene, so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by the gingerbread woman, who by the hobby-horse man, who by the costardmonger, nay, who by their wares. Or that will pretend to affirm on his own inspired ignorance, what Mirror of Magistrates is meant by the justice, what great lady by the pig-woman, what concealed statesman by the seller of mouse-traps, and so of the rest.'

For abundant illustrations of the subject of this comedy the reader may be referred to H. Morley's *History of Bartholomew Fair*.

[2] All doubt, if any could exist, is removed by the fact that, in his *Expostulation with Inigo Jones*, Jonson compares his adversary to Adam Overdo—a character in the very *Bartholomew Fair* in which he was supposed to have satirised him as Leatherhead.

[3] Goethe's admirable *Jahrmarkt von Plundersweilen*, in form exceedingly felicitous, is too slight in treatment to be compared with Ben Jonson's comedy.

Its purpose was a sound though not a lofty one; but it may be that this picture of gross pleasure and brutal greed suggested to the imagination of another and very different poet his own picture of the Vanity Fair which his pilgrims must 'needs go through [1].'

The Devil is an Ass (acted 1616).

The oddly-named[2] comedy of *The Devil is an Ass* (acted in 1616) already exhibits a certain degree of decay in Jonson's dramatic powers. The idea of the play is original and happy, but it can hardly be said to be carried out with adequate force. 'Pug, the less devil' being desirous of doing 'some service to the commonwealth' of which he is a member, is permitted by 'Satan, the great devil' to make the venture, and engages himself as servant to Fabian Fitzdottrel, a squire of Norfolk. The result of all his efforts is, however, that he finds himself completely outwitted, and is finally carried off by 'Iniquity,' so as to be saved from the gallows. The idea of the play is therefore as soundly moral as its plot is ingenious; but apart from the circumstance that the plot is rather slow in preparation, and not, I think, very perspicuous in its later developement, one radical mistake is made. Pug's cleverness is so far below par, that he suffers as much for his clumsiness as for his viciousness; and it cannot be called a contest *ubi tu pulsas ego vapulo tantum.*

The comedy however is full of humour, particularly in the whole character of Fitzdottrel, who after taking Pug into his service on the credit of his *name* of Devil, refuses to believe his assurance that he is such in *fact*[3]. Fitzdottrel belongs to a species of characters which, as Gifford points out, Jonson loves to draw—the simpleton or 'gull.' His ambition to become 'Duke of Drowndlands' by taking

[1] I see no reason against the supposition that Bunyan had read (he could not have seen) *Bartholomew Fair*. Cf. Gifford's note to iii. 1.

[2] Schlegel, seizing with his usual felicity upon an untranslateable German idiom, calls the play *Der dumme Teufel*; and the German title is accordingly twice as good as the English. The phrase 'the Devil is an ass' appears to have been proverbial. See Fletcher's *The Changes* (v. 2):

'Dost thou think
The devil such an ass as people make him.'

[3] v. 4.

part in a project for draining the waste lands of the kingdom is a satire by no means far-fetched, either for Jonson's age or for any other abounding in 'projects' and 'projectors.' The particular 'projector' of this play, Meercraft, with his schemes for making twelve thousand pounds by a new method of dressing dogskins, twenty thousand by a new system of bottling ale, and an untold sum by 'making wine of raisins,' and another by 'serving the whole state with toothpicks[1],' is excellent; yet he is not made so much of as the Alchemist is in the play of that name, and serves chiefly as an instrument to work the folly of Fitzdottrel. There is also some vigorous satire in the scene between the goldsmith Gilthead and his son, to make whom a gentleman the father carries on the doubtful practices of his trade[2]. The pretended exorcism of pretended evil spirits, so rife in this age, is ridiculed in very vigorous fashion[3].

Among the other characters, it is pleasing to note that Ben Jonson has done honour to female virtue in the character of Mrs. Fitzdottrel, notwithstanding the giddiness, and to gentlemanly feeling in that of Wittipol, notwithstanding the sensuousness, which they respectively at first betray.

It has already been incidentally mentioned[4], that Jonson has introduced some reminiscences of the mysteries and moralities in the speeches of Satan and of the Vice, Iniquity.

The Staple of News (acted 1625).

A long interval precedes the date of Jonson's next comedy: and in *The Staple of News* we have a play, produced perhaps at the call of want, certainly bearing the marks of old age. The author is quite aware of this; he anticipates the view which will be taken of his powers as

[1] ii. 1; iv. 1.

[2] iii. 1. The definition of debt by Everill is worth quoting:

'They owe you that mean to pay you: I'll be sworn
I never meant it.'

I think I have met with this sentiment elsewhere.

[3] v. 5.

[4] *Ante*, p. 61.

decayed[1]; but this only rouses him to display, as it were defiantly, his most prominent characteristics; and it may be almost said that there is a species of mannerism of mind about this comedy.

Its design is allegorical, and was of course suggested by the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, from which passages are borrowed[2]. But though a large admixture of direct satire (by far the best part of the play) is added, it cannot be said that the comedy as a whole was well suited for the popular stage. The bye-plot of the Staple-of-News Office is however excellent; it is neither the first nor the last time that admirable fun has been made of the humours of a newspaper office[3]; but the Press was in its infancy in Jonson's days, and the defects in its management were still such as to make the very idea of its operations laughable. The stupid public resented this attack upon the purveyors of its favourite intellectual nourishment, and had to be softened down by an *envoi*. The idea of the 'Canters' College' is admirably worked out, though perhaps too elaborately for a drama; the notion might have served as the framework for a satire on a plan like that of *The Ship of Fooles*. Ben Jonson's uneasiness about the public betrays itself in the caveats which (iv. 1) he thinks it necessary to append to this passage (the scene by the bye is laid in the familiar locality of the Apollo room in the Devil Tavern); but nowhere is the moral indignation of the poet more genuine and more direct than in the speeches

[1] See the close of act iv. The Prologue is far more self-contained, though equally self-conscious.

[2] Cf. ii. 1; iv. 1. The broadly-humorous passage about the dogs (v. 2) was suggested by *The Wasps*.

[3] The thought of the Staple-of-News Office first occurs in Jonson's mask of *News from the New World discovered in the Moon*, presented at Court in 1625. Fletcher, who undoubtedly had Jonson's play before him, makes fun of the same idea in *The Fair Maid of the Inn* (iv. 2). Cf. also Shirley's *Love Tricks* (i. 1).—The modern comic stage has of course a more serious task in castigating the vices, or ridiculing the foibles, of journalism; for in Jonson's age the journalist was merely a newsmonger. Perhaps the best German comedy produced by a living author is G. Freytag's *Journalisten*, while it is hardly necessary to recall the furore created by V. Sardou's *Rabagas*. Our own stage has made no attempt in recent times to illustrate, except in passing, a subject which one would have thought peculiarly attractive.

containing them. The intermezzos of the gossips Mirth, Tattle, &c., on the other hand, are not particularly lively; but Jonson could never resist his desire to guide the judgment of his audience.

The New Inn, or, The Light Heart (acted Jan. 19, 1629).

If in *The Staple of News* the old fire still burns, it seems all but quenched in the most unfortunate of all Ben Jonson's plays—*The New Inn, or, The Light Heart.* This comedy was produced on Jan. 19, 1629, but was received so unfavourably as not to be even heard to the end. It was published by the author two years afterwards, with an angry title-page declaring it to be here offered 'as it was never Acted, but most negligently Played by some, the *King's Servants;* and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the *King's subjects,* 1629. Now at last set at Liberty to the Readers, his *Majesty's* Servants and Subjects, 1631;' and with an address to the reader conceived in a similar spirit[1].

Apart from the question of the consideration due to an eminent artist on account of past services—and unfortunately keenness of criticism seems unable to co-exist with generosity in the public temper[2],—it cannot be said that *The New Inn* was unjustly damned. Ben Jonson's remark[3] that 'the only decay, or hurt of the best men's reputation with the people is, their wits have outlived the people's palates,' whatever its general truth, will not apply to the case of this unfortunate comedy. Its plot is absurd—in parts even grossly so[4]; while the comic passages proper—the vulgarities of Tipto and Fly and his

[1] The Prologue had been comparatively moderate in tone, but by no means of a kind to conciliate good-will. The Epilogue, on the other hand, is very touching; another was written 'in the Poet's defence, but the play lived not, in opinion, to have it spoken.' On the *Ode (to Himself)* composed after this misfortune I have already touched. It was (not unwittily) answered by Feltham; and called forth a flattering echo from Randolph, another of vigorous praise from Cleveland, and a third, in which praise is judiciously mixed with gentle reproof, from Carew.

[2] It has been often pointed out that at the present day the London public is greatly superior to that of Paris in its generosity to old favourites; but there is another side to the question.

[3] In the *Discoveries.*

[4] I refer to the disguise of the mother as a degraded Irishwoman.

associates, as well as the quite useless intermezzo of the tailor's wife—are heavy and tedious. Yet some of the characters are pleasing; nobility of breeding is well preserved in the Host (a nobleman in disguise); there is some vivacity in Prue (whose name was originally Cis, to which for some mysterious reason the public objected[1]), and a touch of a Portia-like conflict between high spirit and feeling in Lady Frampul. The notion of the trial of Lovel's passion by a declamatory test is better suited to a mask than to a comedy; and there is no Miltonic afflatus to wing the noble morality of the 'appellant's' speeches. The oration in honour of true valour is however finer than that in praise of 'Platonic' love, which is cold and colourless[2].

The Magnetic Lady (acted 1632).

After *The New Inn* Jonson produced two further comedies, of which the earlier, *The Magnetic Lady* (acted 1632), seems to have not been wholly unsuccessful. Yet in it we have in truth nothing more than the remnants of Ben Jonson,—dry leaves from a nosegay of brighter days. The conception of the piece is that of assembling a variety of characters, each distinguished by its own 'humour,' around a centre arising out of a dramatic action; but there is nothing *magnetic* about the lady except the money of her niece, and the humours of the characters in general are described rather than illustrated by the action itself. In the execution the marks of old age are apparent. Gifford praises the character of Polish, the she-parasite of Lady Loadstone, as an unequalled dramatic picture of the 'gossipping toad-eater;' at all events this character is more

[1] See the second Epilogue.

[2] It may be interesting to compare a passage in this play (i. 1), where the Host says,

> 'If I be honest, and that all the cheat
> Be of myself, in keeping this Light Heart,
> When I consider all the world's a play;
> The state of men's affairs, all passages
> Of life, to spring new scenes, come in, go out,
> And shift, and vanish; and if I have got
> A seat to sit at ease here in mine inn
> To see the comedy,' &c.,

with a far more original application of the familiar simile in the *Discoveries* (*De vitâ humanâ*; Cunningham, iii. 404). Cf. *ante*, p. 401.



vigorously drawn than the rest of the *Intimes*[1] of the Magnetic Lady. The author's undertaking to 'reconcile' the humours contrasted with one another is indeed carried out in part, but very perfunctorily. Altogether the play is by no means devoid of ingenuity[2]; but on the other hand it is not free from coarseness[3].

Although this play, as should be remembered in criticising it, was the work of a bed-ridden author, his self-confidence was still far from extinct, as the Induction and intermezzos sufficiently show. When the play was scurrilously attacked in some satirical lines by Alexander Gill, Jonson defended himself (not very brilliantly) in an *Epilogue to the King*.

A Tale of a Tub (acted 1633).

The last piece of Jonson's brought on the stage was unsuccessful, and in spite of an element of novelty in it, or perhaps on account of the inadequacy of the author's power to perform the task which he thus imposed upon himself, is by far the least interesting of his plays. It was not likely that in his old age and on a sick bed Jonson should have succeeded in giving to this comedy of rustic manners—for such is the character of *A Tale of a Tub* (acted 1633)—that freshness of tone which alone can render pleasing a realistic picture of rural life. In his better days he might have come into closer competition with *The Merry Wives*. On the other hand, this comedy displays the author's usual care and completeness in points of detail; the dialect (which, though the scene lies about London, seems partially Western) had doubtless been made by him a subject of considerable study; and a superabundance of homely proverbs is introduced, showing a curious familiarity with folk-lore of this description. The earlier part of the piece contains some references to the usages of

[1] V. Sardou's admirable comedy of this name will be remembered as one of the very best efforts of this skilful dramatist.

[2] The sophistical defence of wealth (ii. 1) is clever, but too elaborate for a drama.

[3] The oaths, however, which the players had introduced into *The Magnetic Lady*, and which on being summoned before the High Commission Court they laid to the charge of the author, they afterwards confessed to be their own interpolations. See Dyce's Introduction to Shirley's *Works*, p. xix.

St. Valentine's Day, but there is little or no poetry thrown round this or other passages admitting of it. The heroine Awdrey, who has almost as many suitors as Penelope, is a sketch perhaps true to nature, but coarse and unpleasing; the comic characters—even Hannibal Puppy—fail to amuse. Nor is the play improved by being made the vehicle of personal satire. For Inigo Jones is derided under the character of In-and-in Medley the cooper, who calls himself *architectonicus professor*[1], and who devises the so-called mask which closes the play in the printed copy, though it was omitted when the piece was performed on the stage and at Court. There is no perceptible wit in this puppet-show, which merely reproduces in a series of 'motions' the substance of the action of the play itself.

The title of the play explains itself from the name of one of the characters (Squire Tub)[2]; but the origin of the phrase is in one passage referred to the tub of Diogenes[3]. I presume it to have been proverbial even before Jonson, though the remembrance of the name of his play may have helped to suggest the title of his apologue to our greatest English satirist[4].

The Sad Shepherd (by 1637).

Whether or not Jonson left *The Sad Shepherd* behind him in the unfinished state in which it has come down to us, must remain undecided; nor is it possible to fix the date of the composition of this charming fragment, except in so far as in the first line of the Prologue the author speaks of himself as

'He that hath feasted you these forty years.'

But this does not prove the play to have been written at the same date as the Prologue; and this latter merely indicates the expected time of the production of the piece. What we have consists of three acts (with their arguments), the last of which is unfinished, and a Prologue.

In this Prologue Jonson alludes to the discussions which

[1] iv. 2. [2] i. 3. [3] iv. 2.

[4] One would have expected to find it in the Diogenes scenes in Lyly's *Campaspe*, but I have not noticed it there. It occurs in the morality of *The Marriage of Wit and Science* (pr. prob. 1570).

had recently arisen concerning the theory and practice of the species of drama of which *The Sad Shepherd* is an example; and his work, though it was preceded by more than one English pastoral drama of note, accordingly offers the first fitting opportunity to make a few remarks on a subject to which it will not be necessary to return at length.

The modern pastoral drama.

In a previous passage of this book[1] the origin of the Italian pastoral drama was briefly noticed; and the influence of this peculiar species of production has been apparent in the works of more than one of the Elisabethan dramatists already passed under review—more particularly in those of Lyly. Properly speaking, the modern pastoral drama (of which the piscatorial, where the personages are fishermen instead of shepherds, is only another form[2]), like modern pastoral poetry in general, followed two courses, which were not however always kept distinct. The one was the *naïf* or natural species, of which the Sicilian idyll is the prototype; the other the artificial or allegorical, which has Arcadia for its favourite scene and the mystic worship of Pan for its central conception. But into both species a parodistic element inevitably enough introduced itself from the very first; and the pastoral drama of the Italian Renascence, like the pastoral poetry of the Roman Renascence and that of our own literature, both Elisabethan and 'Augustan,' was always either conscious of its artificiality, or intentionally availed itself of its machinery for secondary purposes of a didactic or satirical description.

The Italian pastoral drama.

The father of the Italian pastoral drama was the famous Politian (Agnolo Poliziano, 1454–1494), whose *Orfeo* begins like an idyll and ends like a tragedy. Intended of course to be performed with music—for the pastoral drama is the parent of the opera—it developes its story simply, and with

[1] vol. i. p. 131.

[2] It sprang from the *Egloga Pescatoria*, invented by the Neapolitan Sannazaro (1485–1550), of which the prototype was the 21st *Idyll* of Theocritus (Ἁλιεῖς). Cf. Klein, v. 9. I cannot recall any English dramatic effort in this particular direction (it will be seen that Jonson intended one); but Goethe's charming *Fischerin* (1782) is a well-known example.

no symbolical intention[1]. Niccolo dà Correggio's (1450-1508) *Cefalo, or Aurora* and others followed, before in 1554 Agostino Beccari produced, as totally new of its kind, his Arcadian pastoral drama of *Il Sagrifizio*. Here the comic element prevails, as in Agostino Argenti's *Lo Sfortunato* (1567), which is a comedy of amorous intrigue in pastoral dress.

Tasso's Aminta.

But an epoch in the history of the pastoral drama is marked by the *Aminta* of Torquato Tasso, acted at Ferrara in 1573. This celebrated poem is simple in plot; but its design is allegorical, and the Arcadia presented is a reflexion of the Ferrara court, the poet himself appearing as one of the shepherds (Tirsi). Adorned by choral lyrics of great beauty[2], this pastoral drama is an allegorical treatment of a social and moral problem, touching the minds of the hearers with its subtle applicability. The conception of the characters, all of whom think and speak of nothing but love, is artificial; and the charm of the poem lies not in the interest of its action, but in the passion and sweetness of its sentiment[3].

Guarini's Pastor Fido.

Passing by other Italian pastoral (and piscatorial) dramas more or less based on the model of the *Aminta*, we finally come to the *Pastor Fido* (1590, but written some years earlier) of Battisto Guarini (1537–1612). It seems to have been produced in rivalry of Tasso's *Aminta*, which had

[1] Klein, in whose fifth volume will be found a full account of the developement here only described in its merest outline, recalls Theseus' criticism in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (v. 1) of the obsolete style of pastoral drama, curiously enough applied to a play on this very subject of Orpheus. Lysander offers as an entertainment

> 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
> Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage;'

but Theseus rejects it as stale:

> 'That is an old device, and it was play'd
> When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.'

[2] The theme of one of the choruses is the glorification of the maxim '*s' a piace, ei lice*,' to which Guarini in his *Pastor Fido* opposed the '*Piaccia se lice*,'—the '*Erlaubt ist was gefällt* and *Erlaubt ist was sich ziemt* of Goethe's *Tasso*. Cf. Klein, v. 141.

[3] Cf. Sismondi, *Lit. of Europe*, i. 399–401 [Engl. Tr.].

now been printed. Founded on a tragic love-story related by Pausanias (vii. 21[1]), it largely adds to and complicates the intrigue, and introduces a comic element, partly with a satirical intention. One of the most charming scenes[2] leads to one of the most touching situations; while in the end a tragic complication is happily solved.

This famous piece, while it attracted unbounded popularity (the edition of 1602 is the twentieth), at the same time provoked much criticism, of which the gist lay in an objection addressing itself rather to the mixture of tragedy and comedy in general—in other words to *tragi-comedy* proper—than to the pastoral drama in particular. This is the objection to which Jonson in the Prologue to his *Sad Shepherd* makes reference[3]. It requires no refutation in this place, for it is an objection which applies to the romantic drama in general. What the classical drama permitted itself within the limits of the tetralogy, the romantic assumes as its right within the limits of a single play. In the pastoral drama the mixture is especially permissible, inasmuch as the characters among which its action necessarily moves are not heroic of their kind.

Inherent defects of the modern pastoral drama.

The objections to the pastoral drama as a permanent type of art lie far deeper. Its double origin noted above vitiates its growth; for the pastoral dramatist, like the pastoral poet in general, is perpetually hovering on the boundary-line between the real and the symbolical, between a direct and an allegorical meaning. Moreover, the ma-

[1] As Klein (v. 180) observes, the title ought properly to be *La Pastorella Fida.*

[2] The *giuoco della cieca*, the shepherdesses' game at blind man's buff, in which Amarilli catches Mirtillo, but will not allow herself to be held fast by him. The soliloquy of passionate desire which follows was placed on the Index.

[3] 'But here's an heresy of late let fall,
That mirth by no means fits a Pastoral;
Such say so who can make none, he presumes:
Else there's no scene more properly assumes
The sock. For whence can sport in kind arise
But from the rural routs and families?'

In his *Conversations* Jonson blames Guarini for 'making Shepherds speak as well as himself would;' but as Klein points out (v. 227), Guarini's Italian critics had no conception of the poetico-dramatic humour which he lacked.

chinery of its earliest and most perfect models is only with difficulty exchanged for one appropriate to different times and scenes than those of the classical eclogues; and either the classical mythology has to be retained, or a less pliant mythology has to be substituted, or an imaginary one has to be invented. The whole idea of shepherds or fishermen in primitive conditions of life, with beliefs drawn from a religious system springing directly out of the observation of nature, and with manners and customs at once simple and poetic, is incapable of realisation for the modern mind, and least of all capable of realisation on the stage [1].

Artificiality of the Elisabethan pastoral drama.

The English pastoral drama—where it is not a simple reproduction of the life of real English shepherds, which of course cannot be reckoned under this head—is, like the bulk of English pastoral poetry in general, either artificial or burlesque. The Elisabethan pastoral drama belonged to the former class.

To the artificialities of Lyly and his followers I need not return. The popularity of the *Pastor Fido*, to which Jonson makes pointed reference in his *Volpone*[2], no doubt gave the main impulse to the cultivation of the pastoral drama, of which more instances will have to be noticed before my remarks on this period of our dramatic literature are closed.

[1] In Spain, where pastoral fiction enjoyed so unequalled a popularity in the formal times of Philip II and III, in England during the 'Augustan' age, and in France in the Watteau period, the artificiality of the species was never a secret to those who cultivated it.

[2] iii. 2: 'Here 's Pastor Fido

. . . .
All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly;
. . . . . .
He has so happy and facile a vein,
Fitting the time and catching the court-ear.'

Of the *Pastor Fido* an English translation (described by Dyce as, 'in spite of Daniel's commendatory verses, a very bad one') was published in 1602. A version of the *Aminta* ('somewhat altered') in English hexameters had appeared in *The Countesse of Pembroke's Yuychurch, &c.*, by Abraham Fraunce, already in 1602. (See Dyce's Introduction to Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* in *Works*, vol. ii. p. 3.) Randolph's *Amyntas* (1638), briefly noticed below, is in plot independent of Tasso.

Of these Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* bears away the palm for beauty of execution. But no author contrived with so much ingenuity and so much true poetic feeling as Jonson to reduce the artificial element in the pastoral drama to a *minimum*, or came so near towards nationalising an essentially foreign growth.

The Sad Shepherd.

In its design *The Sad Shepherd* is a pastoral pure and simple, eschewing all secondary intentions of a symbolical or satirical character. The reference to the 'sourer sort of shepherds' is indeed a thinly-veiled attack upon the Puritan ministers of the day, and among the joyous rites which are defended against their protests, those of which the author was himself a priest were doubtless in his mind[1]. But the allusion, which is accordingly the direct reverse in spirit of similar passages in the pastoral poetry of both Spenser and Milton, is very naturally introduced, and the current tone of the play is most easily and harmoniously resumed. The love-scenes between Robin and Maid Marian are very gay and natural; and the mean between rustic simplicity and rusticity is preserved with admirable tact.

There is also considerable ingenuity in the device of the machinery of the play. Instead of gods and goddesses, nymphs and satyrs, the supernatural agents are a witch and her attendant Puck-Hairy, whom, notwithstanding Gifford, I cannot regard in any other light than as the unregenerate Puck[2]. The witch Maudlin and her son and daughter talk Lowland Scotch, although the scene of the play is laid in Sherwood Forest; and it may be that Jonson remembered the fact that Scotland was 'more particularly the region of witchcraft[3].' Thus, so far as the play proceeds, we are

[1] i. 2. Prynne's *Histriomastix* had been published in 1633.

[2] Robin Goodfellow makes his appearance in Jonson's mask of *Love Restored*, presented at Court 1610–11.

[3] Waldron, Preface, p. viii. The additional conjecture that Maudlin 'was originally of that country' (Scotland); 'banished it for her misdeeds, like Shakspeare's Sycorax from Argier; and now settled in a more southern part of the island,' is, to say the least, unnecessary, besides suggesting an odd sort of punishment for a Scotch witch.

not distracted by any intolerable mixture of associations, although of course passages occur suggested by classical reminiscences, of Theocritus in particular.

High praise is therefore due to Jonson's experiment—unhappily preserved to us in an unfinished state. In *The Sad Shepherd* he has with singular freshness caught the spirit of the greenwood. If there is more robustness about this pastoral than either Spenser's or Milton's efforts in the same direction, this is owing partly to the character of the writer, partly to the fact that his 'shepherds' are beings of a definite age and country. At the same time it will be observed that the characters of this pastoral are in part not shepherds at all, but Robin Hood and his merry men. It would be difficult to say how the lucky combination thus hit upon could be repeated. But the play has merits besides those of invention; there is some poetic passion in the laments of Æglamour, and some gentle tenderness in the sufferings of poor little Amie. The witch and her son are vigorously drawn [1].

The May Lord (lost).

Jonson composed another pastoral entitled *The May Lord*, which has been unfortunately lost. According to the description which he gave of it to Drummond, it was allegorical in intention, introducing the author himself under the name of Alkin, who in the 'first storie' 'cometh in mending his broken pipe;' and as Drummond adds, 'contrary to all other pastoralls, he bringeth the clownes making mirth and foolish sports.' He also, as he informed Drum-

[1] *The Sad Shepherd* was continued by Waldron, and published in this form with Notes and an Appendix (1783). With the exception of the third act (for his share in which he had the guidance of Ben Jonson's *Argument*) the continuation is all Waldron's own invention, though passages from other authors are made use of, in what he conceives would have been the spirit of Ben Jonson, while one speech is chiefly borrowed from Jonson himself. The excellent Waldron (whose notes are very useful) was however unequal to this part of his task; no child could mistake what he has added for genuine Jonson; many lines bear the stamp of the age in which they were produced, nor is the grammar always perfect. The invention of the second part of the plot is however fairly sufficient, though Waldron takes too much trouble to marry every good personage of the drama at the close, and to convert every bad one. The repentance of the witch reads like that of a sinner freshly awakened by clerical advice.

mond, intended to write a fisher or pastoral play, and 'to sett the stage of it in the Lowmond lake[1].'

The Mask.

It remains briefly to notice the creative activity of Ben Jonson in what can hardly be regarded as a branch of dramatic literature proper, though the points of contact between it and the drama are too many to allow it to be passed by in this survey. In an early passage of this book[2] I traced in its outline the history of the origin of the mask; and I then pointed out that there is no intrinsic difference between the latter and the earlier species of entertainments customary at the English Court and in the great houses of the nobility. The mask is, properly speaking, nothing more or less than a dance with masks, and a dance always remained its central point—the pivot so to speak on which the structure turns; but in other respects it is quite as elastic as the entertainments which it to some extent superseded. The distinction between a mask and a disguising is therefore no essential difference, and *e.g.* several of the entertainments composed by Jonson, though not, properly speaking, falling under the designation of masks, may be classed with them as to all intents and purposes homogeneous[3]. The degree in which a mask mixed the elements of declamation, dialogue, music, decoration, and scenery was determined by no inner law, but merely by the circumstances of each particular case. In its least elaborate form —from a literary point of view—it nearly approached the pageant, so consistently favoured by the citizens of London; where the characters were more carefully worked out, where something like a plot kept the whole together, and where something like an action was introduced, it trenched to some extent upon the domain of the drama.

[1] As to Jonson's supposed share in Middleton's comedy of *The Widow*, *vide in loc.*

[2] *Ante*, p. 82.

[3] Cf. *A Tale of a Tub* (v. 2):

'*Tub.* Can any man make a mask here in this company?
Pan. A mask! what's that?
Scri. A mumming or a show,
With vizards and fine clothes.
Clench. A disguise, neighbour,
Is the true word.'

Its nature that of an occasional piece.

It would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into any detailed examination of the progress made in the cultivation of these entertainments during the Elisabethan age and that which immediately succeeded it. To a far greater degree than is the case with the regular drama, the success of a mask must depend upon external aids; designed for immediate effect on a special occasion, it must largely rely upon these aids, and may fairly claim not to be judged apart from them. Nor will the consideration be overlooked that as it is intended for a special occasion, so a mask is also addressed to a particular audience which is prepared to apply what it witnesses in one particular direction. Every mask is of its nature what the French call a *pièce d'occasion;* and no such piece can be thoroughly appreciated without the occasion itself.

Its consequent difficulties.

At the same time the mask, and all entertainments partaking of the same character, make a strong demand upon the inventive powers of those who have to devise it. While the significance of the device is more or less given beforehand, the way in which the device is suited to the significance is left to the inventor. Forced to work within narrow limits, to suit special tastes, often to meet a particular occasion, he is at the same time called upon for novelty above all things; he is to satisfy curiosity where in one sense everybody knows what is coming, and to please by originality where he can only be original at the risk of neglecting his primary duty of keeping to his place in the programme.

So far as the literary part of the mask is concerned, a successful result can therefore only be achieved by a writer of unflagging inventive power, of great quickness in discovering and rendering perceptible associations between the actual and the imaginary, and of a learning never at fault in supplying allegorical figures or symbolical situations to serve as the machinery indispensable to the effect. A true poet may to these requisites add the power of carrying his audience beyond the mere occasion of his invention, so that while starting from a given point he elevates himself and them as it were unconsciously into a loftier sphere.

Ben Jonson is the most successful, as he is the most

prolific, author of masks. Of his numerous compositions of this kind many hold a permanent place in our poetic literature, and taken together they furnish an extraordinary proof of the fertility and versatility of his poetic genius. He was conscious enough of his success in this direction—'next himself,' he said, 'only Fletcher and Chapman could write a mask.' Fortune favoured him in placing on the throne a patron whose learned tastes caused him to view with peculiar favour this species of entertainment[1]. It is the last infirmity even of a higher order of scholarship than James I possessed, to pride itself on its readiness in perceiving allusions; and allusiveness is the very atmosphere of the mask. But the love of splendour which characterised the age, and the great advance which the decorative arts were making at this time, were of course the principal causes of the favour extended to these amusements. Lastly, they gratified the sense of aristocratic exclusiveness (this will of course not apply to the pageants which still continued in vogue), and to the nobility they supplied constant occasions for emulating one another in extravagant and costly flattery of a prince the top of whose bent in this respect it was not easy to reach.

Jonson's success as a writer of masks and entertainments.

But if the times called for this species of production, there was no man so well fitted to supply the demand as Jonson. The strength of his dramatic genius lay in the power of producing variety of character; and characters, or their semblance,—not action, or even the semblance of action,—constitute the main dramatic element of the mask. His learning was unrivalled by that of any contemporary dramatist; and it supplied him with endless figures and situations for his purpose. It was of course especially in the storehouse of classical mythology that he sought his devices; and with its contents he was pre-eminently familiar. Lastly, it was part of his nature to work at whatever he essayed with his whole strength, to throw himself heart and soul into his task, and to hamper himself with no doubts as to the importance of literary

Congeniality of this form to his powers and acquirements.

[1] Nichols.

labours in which he had once engaged. He defends the dignity of the best kind of mask with no half-hearted ardour[1], and bitterly resented the endeavour (or what he supposed to be such) to subordinate its literary element to its mere external adjuncts[2]. He was not indeed, as it would seem, throughout successful in maintaining the claims of the literary element in the mask against the representatives of the decorative element; on his quarrel with Inigo Jones—or 'Iniquo Vitruvius,' as he came sarcastically to salute him[3]—I have already touched; but in good times and in bad he here as elsewhere remained faithful to his own conception.

Characteristics of his masks.

From the above remarks will be gathered my view of the general characteristics of this division of Jonson's works. In it he shows an almost inexhaustible inventiveness, drawing his devices partly from classical story (in which instances he loves to give in his notes chapter and verse for the sources of his erudition), partly from later legend or history. The construction of his masks was the least part of the labour; but on this head he (apparently in deference to the taste of the King) in his later masks almost invariably adopted an ingenious innovation which furnished him with admirable opportunities for the display of his comic genius. This was the *anti-mask*[4], which has been

The anti-mask.

[1] See the prefatory remarks to *Hymenaei:* 'This it is hath made the most royal princes and greatest persons (who are commonly the personaters of these actions) not only studious of riches, and magnificence in the outward celebration or show, which rightly becomes them; but curious after the most high and hearty inventions, to furnish the inward parts, and those grounded upon antiquity and solid learning: which though their voice be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense or doth or should always lay hold on more removed mysteries,' &c. (Cunningham, iii. 19).

[2] See *An Expostulation with Inigo Jones*, whom he accuses of endeavouring to assert that

'Painting and carpentry are the soul of mask.'

[3] See *Love's Welcome at Bolsover* (Cunningham, iii. 221).

[4] So the name is usually spelt; although (notwithstanding Gifford) its derivation seems to be either ante-mask or anti*ck*-mask. Ben Jonson's own definition of it as 'a foil, or false mask,' however, favours the spelling adopted. The first instance of its introduction appears to have been in Chapman's *Mask of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn* (1612–3). These anti-masks were for the most part performed by actors hired from the theatres. See the Note in



defined as a species of 'parody which the poet himself occasionally adds to his invention, and generally prefixes to the serious entry[1].' It thus, as Schlegel observes, supplies an antidote to the excess of sweetness with which the flattery contained in the mask itself might be liable to cloy the audience. And it furnishes Ben Jonson in particular with opportunities for the introduction of many humorous characters, lightly but vigorously drawn, and even of comic situations worthy of his dramatic powers. The execution of most of these masks is more than adequate, and frequently rises to a high level. Jonson's lyrical gift, which has been unjustly depreciated, here finds many opportunities of displaying itself with remarkable ease and grace[2]. It cannot be said of him that he raised the mask to the highest poetic level of which this species of production is capable—this was reserved for a genius of a very different order; but it would be an erroneous judgment which should undervalue the learning, the ingenuity, and the creative vigour which he in these masks most abundantly displays.

Lyrical passages.

Nichols' *Progresses of James I*, iii. 33.—An anti-mask is referred to as something introduced, out of the argument, 'to entertain time,' in Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (v. 1). The importance attached by the spectators to the 'nimble antimask' as the 'jollity' in the entertainment is illustrated by a passage in Shirley's *Triumph of Peace* (*ad in.*).

[1] Schlegel.—In Shirley's *The Traitor* (iii. 2) a mask is exhibited allegorising the doom of a debauchee. 'Lust, the Pleasures and the young Man join in the dance.' 'By and bye,' says Sciarrha,

'You shall see all his tormentors
Join with them; there's the sport on 't.'

'Methinks,' objects Lorenzo, 'they

Should have been first, for th' anti-mask.'

But Sciarrha explains that

'In hell they do not stand upon the method
As we at court.'

[2] 'A mask is prepared,' says Hippolito in Shirley's *Love's Cruelty* (ii. 2), 'and music to charm Orpheus himself into a stone; numbers presented to your ear that shall speak the soul of the immortal English Jonson.' In connexion with Ben Jonson's lyrics, it may be noted that the hypothesis is regarded as disproved, according to which he wrote the words of the National Anthem for music by Dr. John Bull (on the occasion of an entertainment given to King James I at Merchant Taylors' Hall 1607, when *Non nobis* seems to have been for the first time sung as a grace, with a reference to the Gunpowder Plot—this being the first instanee on record of the singing of a grace). See Nichols' *Progresses, &c. of King James I*, ii. 142–3.

The combination of these qualities, with much true eloquence and lyrical beauty, gives a lasting value to many of these inventions of his fancy, called forth by a taste artificial indeed, but neither degraded in itself nor degrading to the poet who ministered to its demands[1].

[1] The following is a list of Jonson's Masks and Entertainments. (For an account of most of them in their chronological order of production among the entertainments of the reign of King James I, see Nichols' *Progresses, &c. of King James I*, where several errors in matters of detail committed by Gifford are corrected.)

Part of King James' Entertainment in passing to his Coronation (1603). This consists of devices for the decoration of parts of London and of 'speeches of gratulation' to be spoken by allegorical and mythological personages.

The Satyr (Lord Spencer's entertainment for the Queen and Prince Henry at Althorpe, 1603). A very pretty and light piece, in short couplets running with extreme facility. Queen Anne is here (and in the next) Oriana:

'Long live Oriana,
T' exceed, whom she succeeds, our late Diana'—

certainly a prettier name than Bel-Anna (as in the Theobalds entertainment).

'*The Penates*' (so called by Gifford), (Sir William Cornwallis' entertainment at Highgate, 1604). A mixture of prose and verse; the jokes addressed to the several lords and ladies of the Court, the personal points of which are of course lost, exhibit a spirit of joyous gaiety, and prove Jonson's familiarity with the *personalia* of Court life.

Entertainment of the two Kings of Great Britain and Denmark (Christian IV) *at Theobalds* (1606). The memory of this entertainment is however drowned in that of the great drinking-bout between these august kinsmen.

Entertainment of King James and Queen Anne at Theobalds (1607), 'when the house was delivered up, with the possession, to the Queen by the Earl of Salisbury' (who received Hatfield in exchange). Very prettily conceived: the Genius of the House exchanges his sorrow at the loss of a master for joy at the acquisition of such a mistress.

The Mask of Blackness (1606); *The Mask of Beauty* (1609). Ingeniously contrived and gracefully executed. Inigo Jones devised 'the bodily part' of the former—the Queen suggesting 'limits' for the author's invention. *The Mask of Beauty* contains some pleasing lyrical strophes of a simple kind.

Hymenaei (1606), *or the Solemnities of Mask and Barriers* (*i.e.* tournament) at the ill-omened marriage of the Earl and Countess of Essex. Jonson's favourite 'Humours' take a part in the action, and he learnedly defends his making them and the Affections masculine. The very pretty Epithalamium, imitated (as well as another passage) from Catullus, though effective in its simplicity, is I think overpraised by Gifford.

'*The Hue and Cry after Cupid*' (so called by Gifford), a mask at Lord Haddington's marriage at Court (1608). Here too is an Epithalamium; besides some very pretty lyrical strophes (founded on Moschus) by the Graces in search of Cupid. Cf. Spenser, *Shepherd's Kalendar* (*March*).

The Mask of Queens (1609). This mask possesses considerable interest on



Jonson's characteristics as a dramatist summarised.

Ben Jonson appears to me incomparably the most remarkable of the English dramatists contemporary with Shakspere. The most salient characteristics of his dramatic genius will, I hope, have become apparent from the survey

account of the introduction of the witches. Cunningham points out that Jonson cites Hector Boëce; and I agree with Gifford that 'the Dame' is superior to Hecate in *Macbeth*. Cf. as to the date of *Macbeth*, *ante*, vol. i. p. 414. The date of Middleton's *Witch* is uncertain. King James's *Daemonology* was written ten years before this mask.

The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers (1610). The Lady of the Lake and King Arthur (appearing as a star in the heavens) exchange harangues; and Merlin thereupon exhibits a kind of diorama of British history which is tolerably prosaic and contains some very poor lines. The prophecy about the Princess Elisabeth, when compared with its half fulfilment, in a way little dreamt of by the poet, is curious enough.

Oberon the Fairy Prince (1611), a fresh and charming piece, in which however the Satyrs are rather over-vivacious for a Court entertainment. As to Gifford's suppositions concerning these two pieces, see Nichols, *u. s.*, ii. 271.

Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly (1610-11). The riddling of the *Sphinx* (cf. Schiller's *Turandot*) and the final answer of Love are sufficiently ingenious.

Love Restored (1610-11). Robin Goodfellow's account of his difficulties in obtaining admission to the mask, with side hits at the citizens, is very entertaining.

A Challenge at Tilt (1613). Two Cupids, one the servant of the bride, the other of a bridegroom, challenge one another after 'a marriage.' (The occasion was thus vaguely designated in the Folio, as it was that of the marriage of Somerset to the Countess of Essex, then a subject of universal execration. Cf. Nichols, *u. s.*, ii. 715.)

The Irish Mask (1613), chiefly in the Irish dialect, in honour of King 'Yamish's' successful Irish policy. It likewise alludes to the wretched marriage celebrated at this time.

Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists (1614). Mercury attacks the alchemists in a long prose speech. (Cf. *ante*, p. 571, note.) This contains an anti-mask.

The Golden Age Restored (1615). This piece has a real poetic afflatus, and, true to his sense of the dignity of literature, the poet introduces Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Spenser as representatives of the Golden Age, with which they are to return with their 'better flames and larger light.'

Christmas his Mask (1616). Certainly not much superior in conception to the Introduction to many a Christmas pantomime of our own days, but a popular ballad-tone is happily caught in Christmas' Song.

'The Mask of Lethe' (so called by Gifford), (1617). Contains an anti-mask.

The Vision of Delight (1617). Likewise contains an anti-mask. The extraordinary copiousness of phraseology in Phant'sie's dream-medley is worthy of notice.

Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue (1619). Remarkable as containing the characters of Comus and his Rout. How true is the lesson of these lines as applied

attempted above; but it may be worth while to dwell upon them in conjunction for a moment, before passing on to men inferior to him in their actual achievements, if not in their natural gifts.

per contra to the entertainments which in our own days have taken the place of the mask:

'Grace, laughter and discourse may meet,
And yet the beauty not go less:
For what is noble should be sweet,
But not dissolved in wantonness.'

This mask 'pleased the King so well, as he would have it again'—thereby certainly showing power of judgment—'when it was presented with these additions:'

For the Honour of Wales (an anti-mask), (first produced 'two symmers' before). A facetious intermixture of Welsh local patriotism and loyalty. Cf. *The Irish Mask* (*ante*).

News from the New World Discovered in the Moon (1620). Written by Jonson on his return from Edinburgh, as he reminds the audience in a not very modest passage. The humorous dialogue descriptive of the moon (a fancy often reproduced by comic writers) well introduces the anti-mask of the 'Volatees,' followed by the mask proper.

The Gipsies Metamorphosed (1621) appears to have been a favourite piece, for it was reproduced (after its original performance at Burley-on-the-Hill) at two other places (Belvoir and Windsor). Hence there are two Prologues. (The abuse of the 'devil's own weed' must have particularly gratified his Majesty.) This is one of the gayest and liveliest of Jonson's Court entertainments. After some introductory talking, singing, and dancing by the gypsies (with whose language Jonson exhibits a familiarity which would be surprising in any other author), they tell the fortunes of the King, Queen, and great lords and ladies, which affords an opportunity for abundant compliments. The song of Cocklorrel (Cocklorrel is a dynastic name assumed by a series of Kings of the London Rogues) long continued famous. The Captain of the Gypsies seems to have been represented by Buckingham.

The Mask of Augurs (1623). Introduced by an anti-mask of comic prose.

Time Vindicated to Himself and his Honours (1624). A satirical attack upon scurrilous inquisitiveness, provoked by the satires in vogue, ending with a praise of hunting to the King's address. The *Chronomastix* in this mask is the poet George Wither, author of *Abuses Stript and Whipt* (1613). Cf. Nichols, *u. s.*, iv. 802.

Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion (1624). In honour of Prince Charles' return from Spain (after the breaking-off of the Spanish match, perhaps the best-discussed episode of the history of the seventeenth century). The chief interlocutors are a Poet and a Cook; the Cook's praise of his art may be compared with later efforts of the same kind. The mask, though much practised, was never performed till 1626, when a new Introduction was added (*v. infra*). Cf. Nichols, *u. s.*, iv. 948.

Pan's Anniversary, or The Shepherd's Holiday (1625). The last mask witnessed by King James. It opens very prettily with a catalogue of flowers.

The Mask of Owls, at Kenelworth (1624; see Nichols, iv. 997), is not, properly



His acquirements.

His classical

and modern learning.

In respect of acquired powers, it will hardly be denied that he was infinitely the best equipped of the Elisabethan dramatists. Of his learning enough has been said to make further repetition needless. It was for his age very wide, and, judged by an even higher standard than that of his age, thoroughly solid. He was worthy of being the pupil of Camden and the friend of Selden. His studies, though by no means confined to the Greek and Roman classics ordinarily read in his days, commanded this familiar range with unusual completeness. They included the Greek philosophers as well as the Roman historians and poets. They embraced less known ancient writers as well as the classics proper, extending to Libanius and Athenaeus as well as to Lucian and Plutarch, and to Tacitus and Virgil. It likewise covered a large field of modern literature; from Erasmus and Rabelais he borrowed keen shafts of satire, and of the older English poets he was a warm admirer. He was a student of the works of the great philosopher of his age, while the English drama from its earliest to its most recent phases was familiar to him as a matter of course. Of his classical learning his tragedies furnish the most direct evidence; but there is hardly one of his comedies, or even of his masks, which is not full of illustrations of

speaking, a mask at all, but a comic soliloquy delivered 'by the Ghost of Captain Cox, mounted in his Hobby-Horse,' who exhibits a series of characters as 'Owls.' (Cf. as to Captain Cox, *ante*, p. 81.)

The Fortunate Isles (1625) was the name under which, with a new Introduction, and an anti-mask, *Neptune's Triumph* (*v. ante*) was at last performed.

Love's Triumph through Callipolis (1630). King Charles I himself performed in this mask.

Chloridia (1630). It would appear that the failure of this mask, which Inigo Jones attributed to Jonson's part of the work, produced the quarrel between the pair.

Love's Welcome at Welbeck (the entertainment of King Charles by the Earl of Newcastle, 1633). A slight comic piece (introducing a course at Quintain) with a serious ending.

Love's Welcome at Bolsover (a repetition of the same device before the King at another of the Earl's mansions, five miles from Welbeck, 1634).

To these may be added an *Interlude*, which seems to have been written for the christening of a son of the same nobleman, at which the King and the Prince were present, one of them standing godfather. It is certainly a very coarse piece of fun for an occasion thus grand, but it shows how Jonson could make himself master even of nurses' *specialia*.

his reading. His pride in it is excusable; and it may be noted that while he rejoiced in exhibiting his classical acquirements, he only rarely 'condescends to imitate a modern author[1].'

His scholarship.

But not only was he a man of unusual learning; he may also be said to have been a scholar in the full sense of the term. In saying this, I do not merely refer to the fact that he fairly satisfied the favourite test of English classical scholarship. His own performances as a Latin poet reach no very high level; but it would be difficult to show them to have been surpassed by the efforts of any of his contemporaries. But he read and reproduced what he read in scholarly fashion; in other words he read critically, and digested what he read. Of his own art in particular he had mastered the theory as well as the practice. *Vetus comoedia* was to him no mere tradition, taken at secondhand from native schoolmasters or Italian practitioners; but a literary growth of which he had carefully studied the laws. And his veneration for Aristotle was no mere lip-service; he understood the definitions and the rules of the *Poetics* better than those who were for ever mumbling their dry bones in later periods of our dramatic literature.

His knowledge of the theory of the drama.

His experience and observation of men and life.

His reading was equalled by his experience of men and life. In the course of his days he had passed through many vicissitudes, had been a student, a tradesman, a soldier before he became a public actor and dramatic author, and an agent in the amusements of the Court and the fashionable world. He was not an untravelled man; he knew something of the Flemish plains and the Paris streets; he wandered on foot through the whole length of England; and no part of London can have been unacquainted with the fall of his footstep. His powers of observation were thus fed by constant employment, and his capacity for accumulating external details was tested to the full. He associated on terms of mutual respect with great nobles; he accompanied the progresses of his royal

[1] Coleridge, *u. s.*, p. 283.



patron; scholars and bookmen shared his festive hours; in the gatherings at the Mermaid his was doubtless the best-known as it was the most honoured presence; in the Apollo Room at the Devil he was the high-priest of 'the Oracle.' He knew the City as well as he knew the Court; the revels of highborn lords and ladies were not more familiar to him than the sports of Bartholomew Fair and the humours of suburban villages; 'no country's mirth,' he said, 'is better than our own;' and the whole national life, as it displayed itself to the eye of an observer, lay open before him. Thus he can hardly touch on any department of it, without showing how much he has seen and how much he has remembered. The technicalities of theology and law, the catchwords of false 'popular' science, the phrases of mercantile speculation, the jargon of alchemists and exorcists, the fashionable parlance of high life and the slang of low, the terms and turns of speech, and the manners and customs of all classes, professions, trades, crafts and Bohemianism, are as familiar to him as the pages of his beloved books.

Jonson not merely reproductive in a narrow sense.

But these were merely the instruments with which he worked. His scholarship and his power of observation could not have made him a great dramatist. Of course he had to encounter in life, and his fame has had to encounter since his death, the usual perfunctory criticism to which learned writers and writers displaying a wide observation of men and manners are liable. 'All book-learning!' exclaim the critics annoyed by the display —certainly a little ostentatious—of the authorities whom he followed in his Roman tragedies. 'A mere sponge! nothing but humours and observation' is the charge which he puts into the mouth of a professional adversary[1]; 'he goes up and down, sucking from every society, and when he comes home squeezes himself dry again.' Against such charges, were self-defence in a poet ever successful, except in the rarest cases, no man could have defended him better than he did himself; but those who admire his genius should find no difficulty in rejecting so perverse

[1] See *The Poetaster*, iv. 1.

a view of his creative activity. What made him a great dramatist cannot have been acquired powers; it was necessary that the application of these should be directed by a high purpose and informed by gifts of original genius.

Elevation and definiteness of his purpose.

No poet—dramatic or otherwise—has ever shown himself more constantly animated by a lofty conception of his task than Ben Jonson. To be successful, it was—as he came himself on occasion to confess—necessary to please; but mere transitory applause was not the goal of his ambition. Again and again he proclaims his determination to satisfy competent judges; again and again he recurs to the ideal of the true poet which he has before his eyes. But it is no vague highflown flights which he essays; no pretence of writing for an impossible public of a Utopian theatre which he makes. He not only keeps a definite goal steadily in view; but he has resolved on the path by which he will seek to reach it. Thus in either branch of the drama he sets before himself a distinct purpose. To maintain the dignity of tragedy on the level of what he recognises as its highest models; and in comedy to hold the mirror up to the ridiculous foibles and vices of human nature by realistically reproducing its most striking types of this description,—these are the ends which he consciously pursues.

His dramatic powers. Invention and construction of plots.

The specifically dramatic gifts he brought to the performance of his task were not indeed numerous, but each was of its kind indisputable. His inventive power was perhaps more considerable in the direction of construction than has been usually assumed. He depended to a far less degree than most of his contemporaries—Shakspere himself among them—upon borrowed plots; his apprenticeship as an adapter had perhaps been shorter than that of some of his rivals, but in the matter of plots he seems to have disliked to owe too much to other men. When in the vein, he could construct with lucidity and effectiveness, though he was in some of his best plots careless as to a symmetry to which it would not have been difficult to attain[1]. But in any case it was not here that his chief

[1] This applies not to *Epicoene* or *Volpone*, but to *The Alchemist* and *The Devil is an Ass.*



strength lay. This is to be sought in his marvellous power of conceiving and reproducing character. The strength of his characters is universally acknowledged; they live for us like the characters of very few of our writers in the comic drama or in the comic novel. There are dramatists whose title to enduring popular fame is the creation of a single character; in Jonson we have a whole gallery whose names have almost become household words. Captain Bobadil and Captain Tucca, Macilente and Fungoso, Volpone and Mosca, Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La-Foole, and many others are remembered with Falstaff and his crew, with Parson Adams and Trulliber, with Micawber and Pecksniff. But it is less generally recognised that he possessed the art of seeing and exemplifying the truth that the differences of character are, as has been well said, most perceptible in the extreme points, and that it is by contrasting these that comedy—or comic fiction—will achieve its most subtly as well as powerfully effective results. In this he was guided by his extraordinary gift of humour. Unless Jonson's humour is thoroughly appreciated, he will be inadequately criticised. His characters are never more original than when they at first sight appear to resemble other characters, either created by himself or his contemporaries. If instead of pointing out where Jonson's characters—I will take Bobadil as the most familiar example—resemble Shakspere's, a languid criticism would condescend to enquire where they differ from their supposed prototypes, a beginning would have been made towards an appreciation of his supreme merits. To label Jonson's characters as a mere series of types of general ideas is to shut one's eyes to the nicety with which they are distinguished from others to which they have a superficial likeness. There is hardly one among the comedies of his better days in which he fails to tax his power to the utmost in this direction, without falling short of success. But because he made matters easy to his hearers and readers by defining and describing the characters which he drew, he is set down as having done no more than define and describe; and the living realism of his humour is ignored.

Conception and reproduction of character his chief strength.

His art of comic characterisation.

His humour.

The results of his labours:

With these purposes and these dramatic gifts, and an extraordinary power of language capable of rising from the accurate reproduction of characteristic peculiarities of diction to lofty strains of moral indignation—together with a lyrical power of no common order—Jonson achieved the results which I have attempted to survey.

in tragedy;

In tragedy he added two works of high, but not of the highest, merit to our dramatic literature. To condemn *Sejanus* and *Catiline* as frigid seems to me, especially in the case of the former, to overshoot the mark. But the rhetorical element in both is excessive; and—in *Catiline* more particularly—the author allows himself to be hampered by too close an adherence to his historical authorities. While to the highest efforts of tragic passion his genius is unequal, he commits the radical error of mistaking historical for dramatic truth, and works without the sense of freedom indispensable to the great tragic poet. Thus he is unable to mould as a dramatist the materials which as a scholar he thoroughly commands. He sneers at the public for preferring the playbooks to the chronicles as 'more authentic;' but in reality he has not penetrated the essential difference between the dramatised history and the historical drama. Thus, notwithstanding his sound learning and critical ability, and notwithstanding the powerful touches of character and passages of real eloquence introduced by him into his tragedies, they really mark a retrogression rather than an advance; and, paradoxical as the combination may appear, in the essence of their conception they partake of the imperfections of the old Chronicle History, while the most marked feature in their execution they share with the rhetorical pseudo-classical drama of a later age.

in comedy.

In comedy, on the other hand, the great majority of Ben Jonson's productions mark a most important progress. His master-pieces realise more fully than anything which preceded them in our literature what (at the risk of insisting on obsolete distinctions—obsolete however only if they are pressed beyond a legitimate limit of meaning) I venture again to describe as the highest species of comedy, viz. that in which everything else is subordinated to the dramatic



developement of character. Where this subordination is carried to the extent of neglecting the necessary substructure of an action interesting in itself and successfully adapted to the main object of the play, a failure in this respect is of course to be acknowledged. Thus, with all its merits, *Cynthia's Revels* must be allowed to fall considerably short of the necessary demands in this direction. *The Poetaster*, though more lucidly constructed, labours under the grave defect of a plot pieced rather than welded together. But so far as I can judge, the requisite kind of action seems to be supplied in what may be regarded as Jonson's master-pieces, the twin plays in which he most transparently carried out his theory of the comedy—*Every Man in* and *Every Man out of his Humour*—and among his subsequent works in *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. *Epicoene* ranks near these; but the farcical nature of its admirably constructed plot forbids its being placed on a level with them; while *The Devil is an Ass*, though in humour equal or nearly equal to them all, is inadequate in the conception of its central idea. In *The Staple of News* the infinite humour of part of the execution cannot blind us to the confusing mixture of allegory and direct satire.

Jonson's comic characterisation vindicated as adequate.

In all these comedies, and to a less degree in the remaining comedies and in passages of the tragedies likewise, Jonson's power of drawing character finds endless opportunities for exhibiting itself. It has however been urged [1], that while he is constantly presenting striking types, he fails to exhibit in the action of his plays themselves the process of their developement. In other words, he is deficient in analytical power. The charge seems inadmissible, in so far as it is a charge which can with justice be brought against a dramatist at all. Within the limits of his action he appears to me to *account for* his characters as well as to exhibit them in operation. I am not aware why a dramatist should be asked to 'dig deeper back' than this. What I want in a play is to understand the real nature as well as to see the external features of a character; its 'genesis,' as the

[1] See on this head the remarks of M. Taine.

phrase is, I am content to divine. But Jonson's habit, which he certainly indulged to an unwarrantable extent, of describing his characters by the mouths of other personages in the play, his fondness for furnishing a sort of Theophrastic chorus for the hearer's better guidance, may have misled critics to neglect the characters themselves for these characters of the characters. The best of them at all events we are able to understand through themselves; and to understand a character is to recognise it as true to nature. If it can be traced home to that fountain-head, and if the circumstances which act upon its developement act upon it in consonance with its real 'humour,' all has been done which a dramatic creation of character can do.

His dramatic reproduction of manners.

Lastly, in his marvellously vivid reproduction of manners —in other words, of the passing colours and shades which time and scene throw over the perennial types of humanity —Jonson is unsurpassed, if indeed he is rivalled, by any of his contemporaries. The age lives in his men and women, his country gulls and town gulls, his impostors and skeldring captains, his court ladies and would-be court ladies, his puling poetasters and whining Puritans, and above all in the whole ragamuffin rout of his *Bartholomew Fair*. Its pastimes fashionable and unfashionable, its games at vapours and jeering, its high-polite courtships and its puppet-shows, its degrading superstitions and confounding hallucinations, its clubs of naughty ladies and its offices of lying news, its taverns and its tobacco-shops, its giddy heights and its meanest depths—all are brought before us by one author. And yet it is but rarely that he fails to subordinate his powers of picturesque and lifelike description to his greater power of realising the characters brought out by these backgrounds, illustrated by these cross-lights, and developed with the aid of these accidents.

His pervading consciousness

The consciousness of his aims, and of the degree in which he approaches them, pervades the comedies of Ben Jonson to far too great an extent to admit of a fresh and undisturbed enjoyment even of his master-pieces. His devices of inductions and commentatory intermezzos, though occasionally effective by the excellence of their execution, are to be

regretted as interfering with the effect of his dramatic creations themselves, and as introducing a didactic element into an atmosphere ill-suited to it. This endeavour to revive the relations between author and public which the old Athenian comedy permitted at a single point in its dramatic mechanism—the *parabasis*—would in any case have been hazardous; but made as it was by Jonson with the intention, not so much of setting the poet right with the public, as of forcing his views of Art upon it, becomes almost as wearisome to the reader as it at times seems to have proved offensive to the audience. Yet notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary of one himself an original genius, I should be slow to draw any conclusions from this habit or tendency on Jonson's part with reference to the question whether or not he was 'a genius, a creative power[1].' Shakspere indeed was free from any such tendency—but though they exhibited it in a different and in a less marked way than Jonson, can the same freedom be asserted of some of the greatest of our poets—of Dryden or of Byron—can it be asserted even of Milton? I am not comparing Jonson to any of these, but I ask that if the test be considered decisive in his case, its applicability to that of others be likewise taken into consideration.

not irreconcileable with creative power.

In conclusion, it may not be easy to arrive at a correct estimate of the rank to be assigned in our literature to Ben Jonson—'the sundry postures of whose copious Muse[2]' seem alternately to invite deep admiration and to defy impartial criticism. But leaving aside those works which attest the exuberance of his inventive powers and the versatility of his gifts of expression rather than dramatic qualities of the highest order—leaving aside too as *sui generis* the charming fragment of *The Sad Shepherd*, far too original in manner and treatment to be regarded as a mere imitation—the following summary may seem justified. The loftiness of Jonson's purpose as a dramatist and the sturdy resolution with which he pursued it are not to be confounded with self-delusion and perversity. He was the most, as Shak-

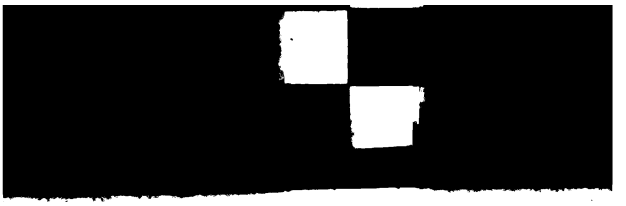
Conclusion.

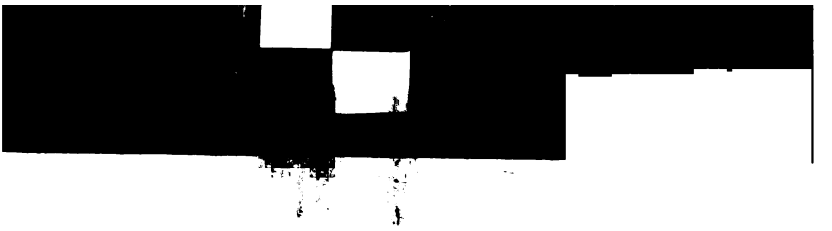
[1] See Coleridge, *Literary Remains*, ii. 273.

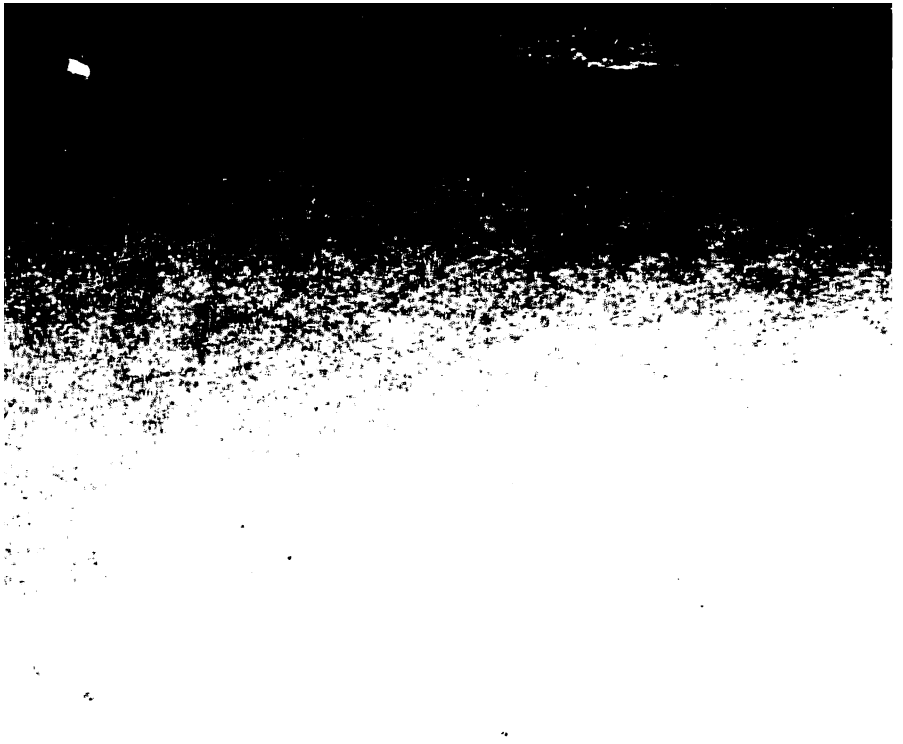
[2] Waller.

spere seems to have been the least, self-conscious of the Elisabethans; but of the ideals at which he aimed, that to which he devoted the most arduous labour, and which was at the same time the most congenial to his natural gifts—the realisation of a true modern comedy of the highest type—he was not far from reaching. But he was no child of fancy—he had to put on his learned sock whenever he came forth from among his loved books upon the stage; and it was his fate, as it is his glory, that his career as a dramatist was a long-sustained effort. The meed of fame for which he so manfully strove shall assuredly not be denied him—least of all by those who know that there is a grain of truth in the famous definition of genius as 'an infinite capacity for taking pains.' He wished, he says in one of his poems, for 'a legitimate fame;' and at the hands of those to whom in his works as in his life he seems peculiarly to appeal, this is the fame which will I think fall to his lot.

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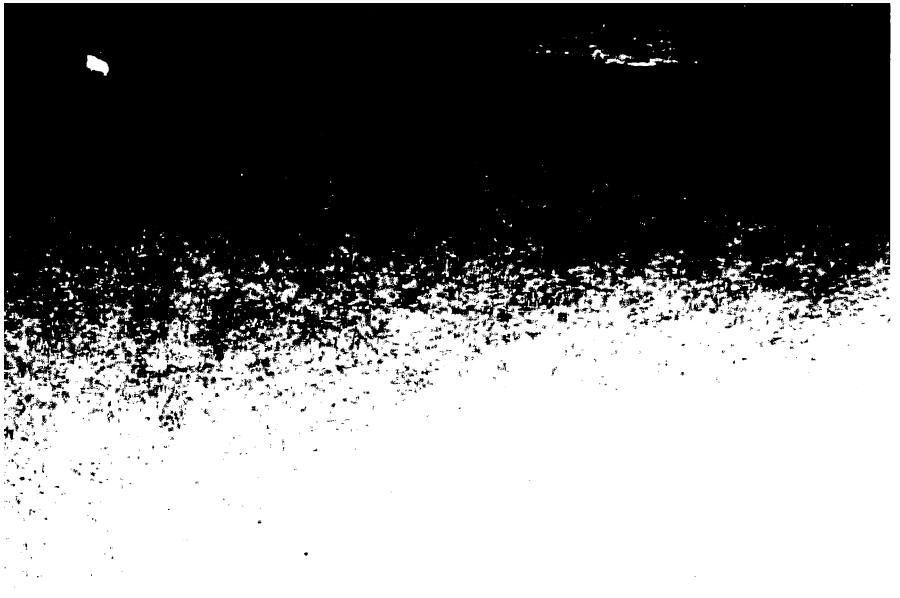








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